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Vol. I

Harkaway in Australia.



Turning on its back, the shark bit at Mole. "Oh, the brute has taken my leg off."

CHAPTER I.

RESTORED—GENERAL REJOICINGS—HOW MR. MOLE
WAS CRUELLY MALIGNED—FATHER AND SON—
THE DEATH KNELL AND THE REPRIEVE—"SOON
WE WEIGH ANCHOR"—GOOD-BY TO GREECE.

"MRS. HARKAWAY?"

"Who's there?"

"Me; your obsequious humble to command."

"Good gracious!"

And then upon the other side of the door Mrs. Harkaway was heard to whisper:

"It's Mr. Mole. I declare he is quite tipsy."

"You are right there, my dear Mrs. Harkaway," responded the gallant Isaac; "more than tipsy, obfuscated, groggy—excuse the slangy phrase—tight, not with liquor, but yet full of spirits—figuratively speaking."

"Whatever is he talking about?" muttered Mrs. Harkaway.

"About introducing a young gentleman to you," replied Mole, who overheard every word, but who was too overjoyed with recent events to take umbrage at anything now.

"Excuse me just now, Mr. Mole," replied the lady. "I—I am dressing."

"Humph!"

Young Jack was bursting with impatience to push him aside and rush into his mother's arms.

But Mr. Mole restrained him.

"The young gentleman I would introduce, my dear Mrs. Harkaway, brings us news of our young Jack."

"Hah!"

A cry of joy, delight, anxiety, fear, hope, all

commingled, burst from the mother of our young hero.

The door was opened, and Mrs. Harkaway stood upon the threshold.

She stared confusedly at the two boys.

"Mother!"

"Jack!"

No more.

In a moment they were locked in each other's arms.

"Oh, Jack—Jack!" exclaimed the astonished mother, "where have you been? Now that you are come back, I may tell you I feared I should never see you again."

Jack's eyes filled with tears.

He kissed her tenderly and held out his hand to Harry.

"Here, mother dear," he said; "there is a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, to keep watch over the life of poor Jack—and Harry is the cherub."

"Hush! Jack."

"I sha'n't hush; Harry, you know that it's true. You are the cherub, and you know it. Why, mother, now that it's all over, and I am here, I must tell you that I never should have been here if it hadn't been for Harry."

"Bless you, Harry," said Mrs. Harkaway, squeezing his hand.

Just then Mr. Mole, who had felt a tingling sensation at the nose, and fearing that he was about to disgrace his manly reputation by a tear, had retired, came stumping back with some news.

"Here comes Jack—old Jack, I mean—here's luck for us."

A well-known footstep was heard, and Jack Harkaway entered the room.

As his eye fell upon Harry Girdwood, he started back, and the color forsook his cheek.

Then he caught sight of his boy, and he gave a cry of delight as he held open his arms.

Young Jack flew to him.

"Come here, Harry," cried Harkaway; "here, my own boy—for you are a second son to me."

And the two boys were soon locked in his arms.

For some minutes not a word was spoken.

His heart was too full for speech, but while they were thus engaged—engrossed by their own happiness, a deep sound was heard.

A dismal, moaning sound.

A bell that sounded like a distant funeral knell.

What was it?

Harkaway started up at the sound.

"Hark!" he exclaimed. "Do you hear that?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"An execution."

"Where?"

"At the prison."

"Of whom?"

"The brigands."

"The villains have earned their fates right well."

"Yes—yes," exclaimed Jack Harkaway, hurriedly; "but this execution must not take place, though Tomaso was shot yesterday."

"Tomaso, the brigand," cried young Jack; "then why not the rest of the brigands?"

"Why? Because it is unjust, for the men condemned to suffer death have been sentenced for murdering you, my own boys."

As the word was uttered, there was a loud commotion, and Theodora burst into the room.

She gave a cry on seeing the two boys, and rushed up to Harry Girdwood.

"Thank Heaven you are safe!" she said, hysterically, "but my own brave boy, do you hear? Do you know that that bell sounds the death knell of men who, bad and wicked as they are, have been wrongfully condemned?"

"I know."

"Yes, my girl," said Harkaway; "we know—but there is yet time to save them. Come on, to the prison."

They all left precipitately, and in a very brief space of time they were at the prison and the brigands respited.

As young Jack said, they had earned the full penalty of the law.

But they would not have it upon their consciences that even these lawless ruffians should suffer for a crime which they had not committed.

"There is one strange fact about this," said the governor of the prison to Harkaway, "and that is, that one of the prisoners has taken the liberty of respiting himself."

"Which one?"

"The Englishman, Hunston."

"What, Hunston escaped?"

"Impossible."

"Indeed it is not."

"But how?—when? Why Hunston any more than the others?"

"We can only give a guess," said the governor, "but it is a good one. His jailer has disappeared with him; the rest is not a difficult matter to guess."

It was quite true.

Hunston had once more contrived to elude justice.

Both had disappeared—prisoner and jailer with him.

"I'm sorry for that," said Harkaway, "for it would have been a good thing to take care of that double-dyed traitor; but no matter, we shall have nothing to fear from him now; we have had enough of this place."

"Are we, then, to leave Greece, dad?"

"Yes, all our preparations are made, and in a few days we will weigh anchor and get away from romantic Greece and its brigands. We shall find enough romance, though, in our new home."

CHAPTER II.

THE LAST OF THE BRIGAND BAND—HUNSTON'S PERIL—HIS WANDERINGS—STARVATION IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY—ON THE LANDING STAGE AT NIGHT—AN ADVENTURE.

AND what of the band?

Where was it?

The fear-stricken few remaining of this once formidable host, hid themselves in the recesses of the mountains, lurking like thieves and miscreants, as they were, in retired nooks and crannies.

And so their lives grew wretched.

Their famous recruit, Geoffrey, who was such a famous hand at bringing in plunder every day, disappeared.

And with him disappeared all the booty he had brought them.

Altogether, therefore, this Geoffrey was not so much of an advantage to them as they had at first supposed.

And with the disappearance of Geoffrey, the sham brigand, we have to chronicle the sudden return of our old friend Dick Harvey, to his beloved Harkaways.

And what of Toro, the giant brigand?

He was completely lost sight of for awhile.

No one knew what had become of him.

Hunston's first care on getting free from the prison was to get into the mountain fastnesses in search of his old comrade, Toro.

But he could not discover the least trace of his old comrade.

He skulked about at night and fled to sleep in the mountains by day, shrinking at the echo of his own footfalls—starting at his own shadow.

"My curses light upon the Harkaways one and all," was the speech ever on his tongue; "they have been my bane—my curse through life."

He resolved to get away from this place.

Yes, he would fly.

But how?

Here was he well nigh starving in the midst of plenty, possessed of a sum of money which was a small fortune in that land, and yet he dare not change or part with it.

This life grew unbearable, and he resolved at all hazards to change it."

Yes, he would get away from this place at once.

Soon after dusk he ventured, well disguised, into the town and down by the water side, and lolling about, he soon chanced to hear something which greatly interested him.

A group of French sailors were smoking and gossiping upon a subject which caught his attention as soon as he heard a name mentioned.

Harkaway.

"Yes, Mr. Harkaway and friends are going away to-morrow," said one of the sailors, who appeared to be a petty officer.

"I shall come down and see the ladies go on board," said one of the sailors.

"No you won't," laughed the former speaker.

"Why not?"

"You're too late."

"They're not on board already, surely?"

"Indeed, they are."

"They start early."

"They weigh anchor at daybreak, I hear."

"Ah, well," said another sailor, joining in, "they'll miss Monsieur Harkaway here, for he's as rich as Croesus."

"Or Monte Christo," said another, laughingly.

"Ay, that he is," said another sailor. "I was here when the ladies went on board, and I was lucky enough to be able to render some little service to Madame Harkaway."

"What was it?"

"It is not worth repeating," replied this modest Gallic tar. "All I know is, that Monsieur Harkaway made such a fuss about it that he would insist upon my going on board with him to drink their health."

"And you went?"

"Yes, and we swam in good wine. And when I came away, it was with pockets full of cigarette and money to stand treat to you all around."

"What a splendid fellow this Monsieur Harkaway is."

"Ay, that he is."

And amid these words of praise Hunston slunk away, gnashing his teeth in rage and bitterness.

"Hang him!" he muttered; "his old brag and ostentation have caught these fools! I wonder where his vessel is? If I could fire a torpedo under it and send them all where young Jack and the other boy have gone to, I shouldn't have a dull moment for the rest of my life."

And the ruffian chuckled maliciously.

"Ah, but I was one with them," he muttered, "when I had their precious boy and that Harry Girdwood shot like dogs that they were. Ah, that was grand. Those were crumbs of comfort."

And rubbing his hands and chuckling, he rambled on.

He paused presently upon coming to a long wooden landing stage, jutting out a long way to sea.

Arrived at the head of the jetty, he looked out earnestly seaward, in the endeavor to trace out which of the many ships in the offing could be the Harkaways' vessel.

"Well—well," he murmured to himself, "I don't care much, for I don't see what I could do if I knew it. I could only send my blessing straight after it—ha—ha! But with Harkaway's departure, I can breathe more freely. I have only to get over a few weeks quietly, and then all the dust which he has kicked up will blow over, and I can live quietly upon his money like a gentleman, until I decide upon the next step."

While he sat thus looking out to sea, his attention was suddenly attracted shorewards.

"Confusion!" he ejaculated, starting up; "there's some one coming along the jetty."

It was true.

Two sailors and a woman came sauntering along the landing stage, chatting as they came.

There was barely room for four abreast upon the narrow wooden pier, and consequently they might recognize him, providing they had heard the description of him.

"What an ass I was to come here," muttered Hunston; "to drive myself into a corner."

He looked around.

They did not appear to notice him.

Not yet at least.

So he crouched down, and lowered himself gently into a boat, which was moored to one of the end piles.

Beneath the end of the jetty was a series of crossbars and beams, resting upon the low range of piles, which indeed served as the main foundation for the whole structure.

So Hunston clambered nimbly out of the boat into this species of scaffolding.

Here he lay at full length, listening for the approach of these three people.

* * * * *

"You had better come aboard now, miss," said one of the sailors.

"No—no," replied Mrs. Harkaway's new maid.

"But you'll never be up in time if you go to bed at all."

"Oh, yes, Mistaire Saileur, I get up at the hour which I like; I shall go on board at three o'clock," said the wilful girl. "I shall get the seasickness quite early enough, I know. Besides, I don't like the water when it is so dark."

"The moon will be up directly."

Jack Tiller was right.

The moon just then burst through a thick cloud, and shot a ray of silvery light just upon the spot where the girl was kneeling.

It fell across a living face just below the flooring of the jetty.

A face rendered ghastly white by the action of the moonlight, with eyes upturned in eagerness and expectation.

A startling sight.

A weird and ghastly object to come suddenly before the strongest nerve.

She started back, and sprang to her feet.

Then with a piercing shriek, she fled.

The sailors looked aghast, staring at each other for explanations.

"Let's after her, Jack," cried one; "she'll be

overboard double quick if she fouls agin them blessed bulwarks. It's as rotten as tinder."

Off they ran, and they tried all they could to bring the girl back.

But she had had such a scare that she would not hear of it.

She had seen a man hiding there.

"Bah!" cried Jack Tiller; "why should a man hide away from us?"

"Yes, that's it, miss, why?"

"I don't care, I know it was a man. I knew the face. I have seen it in madame's book of photographs."

"The deuce you did!"

"Who was it?"

"One of the brigands. The likeness was taken in the prison."

This made the gallant tars laugh again.

"That's the natural bogey hereabouts," said Joe Bassalt; "damme if I believe half their yarns about the brigands."

"Nor I neither."

And so, failing to persuade the girl to go on board then, they went back up the jetty, dropped into their boat, and unlocking it, rowed out to sea.

CHAPTER III.

▲ TRIP BY WATER-BOAT AHOY!—A COMPACT FOR MONEY—THE STOWAWAY ON BOARD THE "WESTWARD HO!"—HIS VISION—IN THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES.

HUNSTON had overheard every word uttered. The full sense of his danger flashed across him.

He was watched, he felt sure.

"Not yet," said Hunston to himself, "not yet. Sooner than let them get hold of me, I'd lay my bones at the bottom of the sea."

With which intention he dropped into the water.

But he did not even touch the bottom, for before he had got far under, he struck out, and after taking a dozen strokes under water, he came to the surface.

"That's another narrow squeak," he said to himself, as he took in a deep draught of air. "The last time I had to swim for it was in Cuba, and a narrow squeak it was, too."

He had been rescued on that memorable occasion by his enemy, Jack Harkaway himself.

"Well, this squares that old account," he said, turning over on his back to float. "He saved me last time. He's the cause this time of my having to take this risk."

He began to look anxiously about him.

There was a boat at no great distance being rowed by two men, so Hunston thought of signalling them.

"Suppose they are some of those wretched Greeks, and recognize me?"

He gave it up.

But he could hardly keep himself afloat now. What if they did recognize him?

Would they give him up?

Perhaps.

Well, at the worst they could only take his life for his misdeeds, and his life was in sore jeopardy now.

So he resolved to hail the men in the boat.

* * * * *

"Boat ahoy!"

"Halloo!"

"Man overboard!"

The signal of the sinking man caught the quick ears of the two men in the boat, and they pulled toward him double quick.

Hunston caught hold of the side of the boat.

"This arm. Catch under my armpit. There; thanks. I've hurt the other."

The sailor reached him just in time.

Barely rescued from the jaws of death, and yet all his coolness and presence of mind had come back to him.

In a trice he was lying in the bottom of the boat, panting and waiting to recover his breath to renew his thanks for their service.

"Why, mounseer, you speak English," said one of the sailors.

Hunston nodded.

"I am English."

"So are we."

"I guessed as much," returned Hunston, "by the way you pulled to help a poor devil. It was nearly all over with me."

"Just in time. Well, that's one to us, messmate."

"Yes, and you'll find that I'm able to reward you with something more solid than thanks."

"Get along; me and my mate here don't save lives at so much an 'ed."

"I believe you," said Hunston, "but I should

be a villain if I did not do something handsome for you if I could."

"I tell you what, mate, you shall lug me and my mate out of the water."

"When you get the chance," laughed the other.

"Jes' so."

"How came you there, though?" demanded the former sailor, suddenly.

"It's a long story," said Hunston, taking breath, and thinking up a good plausible "whacker," "so I'll tell you without all the details."

"Do."

"There's a very rich and powerful man in this place, who has a very lovely wife. Well, this lady—"

"Casts sheep's eyes at you."

"Ha-ha!"

"Well, that is about it," returned Hunston, laughingly. "It's no fault of mine. I am sure I never encouraged her. But her husband is precious jealous, and the consequence is that he had got me out to sea in a boat with a gang of murderers—"

"The swabs!"

"Marlinspikes and grampuses!" cried the other.

"They were going to practice a curious trick upon me. It is an institution of their neighbors and masters, the Turks, and they call it the bow-string."

"D—n their fiddling," ejaculated one of the sailors; "I'd like to have 'em heré just awhile. I'd show 'em what black eyes and good old English fisticuffs mean."

"I don't think that they would care to be instructed in that," said Hunston.

"I'd—I'd—"

"Let the gentleman go on," said the other.

"Well, the fact is, I got out, jumped overboard and capsized the boat in my struggling, and some of them, I dare say, have gone to the bottom."

"Hurrah!" shouted one of the sailors.

"Hurrah!"

"I hope you finished off the lot of the swabs."

"I don't think that. But anyhow, I'd give a trifle to get clear out of this place."

"I can tell you how to do it."

"You can?"

"Yes."

"That's jolly."

"Easily done."

Then the sailor suggested bringing him aboard their ship and introducing him to the skipper.

Hunston listened quietly and then shook his head.

"What," exclaimed the sailor, "won't do?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I'll tell you; a blessed outcry would be raised, and the skipper would be forced to give me up to be tried."

"Well, they would not dare to play false."

"Not while there was a British man-o'-war in the harbor; but nothing short of that would prevent the villains doing anything they liked with me. They would go through the mockery of a trial with me, and I should be condemned to death beforehand."

"The vampires."

"Wuss—wuss nor vampires, Joe," said the other sailor, wagging his head gravely.

"There is only one way to get out of this scrape," said Hunston.

"Out with it then."

"Why, earn forty pounds apiece and stow me away on board in the hold, anywhere, until you are out at sea."

The two sailors looked hard at each other.

"Can't do it."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Unpossible."

"I'll tell you why not. Our skipper is the best commander afloat, on'y he won't have no nonsense. We daresn't do it, we daresn't."

"Right, Joe."

"Now, harkye, messmates," said Hunston. "I'm not the man to get any man to fail in his duty; I wouldn't insult you by mentioning it. But mark my words, your skipper would be the first man to approve of such an act."

They shook their heads.

"Not he."

"I know he would, if what you say of him is right; only d'ye see, he'd think it his duty to give me up for a fair trial. Well, and what would be the result of that? Why, as soon as you had set sail, they'd just do what they liked with me, and you'd never hear of me again in this world, whereas if I was concealed unknown

to have such a good action done on board his ship without his having failed in his duty."

They listened to this, and listening they were lost.

That night Hunston slept in the hold of a ship, two sailors having contrived to smuggle him on board in secrecy.

It had been a difficult task for them, and indeed the sailors well earned the money which he gave them.

Not a soul on board the ship with the exception of the two sailors had the least idea of his presence there.

They contrived to make him up a very snug hiding-place behind some barrels of sugar and salt pork.

And here they brought him food turn and turn about.

And so he chuckled to himself by day and night at the way in which he had defeated his enemies, and escaped from Greek justice.

* * * * *

For three days and three nights he lay snug and quiet.

This was the most prudent course.

But long before the third night was over Hunston had grown weary and heartsick of this close confinement.

He had a sharp attack of the blues.

He got drink from the sailors, and drank heavily to kill dull care, and this defeated its own end.

He fell off into a heavy sleep and dreamt all sorts of terrible things.

He thought that without knowing it he had fallen into the power of the Harkaways again; that in flying from them he had suddenly, when he thought himself miles away from them and from imminent danger, fallen into their arms.

And so went his alarming dream, when his worst enemies were assembled in judgment over him. Jack Harkaway, Harvey and Jefferson together, being his judges, the latter places were suddenly taken by three visitors from the other world.

These were Harry Girdwood, young Jack, and oh, horror! Robert Emmerson, his murdered friend.

His three visitors.

And these three threatened and put him to tortures unimaginable until he raved, stormed, and wept by turns; and then, broken in body and in spirits, he prostrated himself before them and begged them to kill him, and in this horrible phase of his vision he groaned so loudly that he awoke to find the perspiration pouring off him in a regular bath.

He was quivering like one suddenly stricken with ague.

Not an inch of his body was free from this fearful palsy.

"Oh, what would I give for the light now!" he thought; "will they never come?"

Yes.

What was that?

Merciful powers! his prayer seemed to be answered.

He saw the faint glimmering of a light. Yes, it was coming this way.

What a relief!

Silence was around him.

He stretched forward to ascertain the cause of the light, and there he saw that which froze the very marrow in his bones with fright.

The light was all reflected upon a young, handsome face which he knew but too well—so real, so vivid, so life-like.

The face, too, with the deathly hue of the grave upon it.

It was young Jack's face, but looking to Hunston's frightened eyes pale as death.

Hunston stared; his optics dilated and appeared ready to start from their sockets.

He gasped, made an effort to articulate, and then his senses forsook him.

CHAPTER IV.

HUNSTON'S PERIL—BLACK VISIONS—A DREAM OF VENGEANCE—AN UNKNOWN DANGER TO THE "WESTWARD HO!"

An explanation of the foregoing is scarcely necessary, we believe.

You bear in mind, of course, that Hunston was utterly ignorant of the miraculous escape of his destined victims—young Jack and Harry Girdwood.

You must bear in mind, too, that although

you, friend reader, may give a shrewd guess at the truth, Hunston had not the remotest notion of where he was.

This said, you may perhaps understand the fearful effect of this walking vision upon the guilty wretch.

Bear in mind that he had been lurking in a close and stifling hold, into which no single ray of sunlight penetrated for three whole days—three long nights.

Unwelcome conscience tapped and would not be deceived.

A man with the guilt of Hunston upon his mind could not afford to be alone—nay, nor in the dark neither.

* * * * *

When he recovered consciousness, his first sensations were of burning in the throat, and opening his eyes, he found himself being cared tenderly for by one of the sailors who had brought him there.

"Come—come, I say, mister," said the honest tar, who had a bit of a fright on finding Hunston's condition, "this won't do, you know."

"I am better now," murmured Hunston, faintly.

"You are a little—precious little. You will have to come on deck now, and chance what the skipper says about this job."

"Yes—yes; I will," said Hunston, waking up.

"He can't kill us."

"Nor eat me," said the stowaway, with a sickly smile.

"Not he."

"Anything is better than remaining longer here. I believe I should die if I did."

"Then up you come at once, as sure as my name's Jack Tiller."

"Tell me, my friend," Hunston said; "whither are we bound?"

"For the Red Sea."

"Pheugh! A long cruise."

"Well, yes."

"And then we are going further yet, and to travel on until we touch the coast of Australy."

"The deuce!"

"That's it, sir."

"What's the name of the vessel?"

The sailor laughed.

"What makes you grin?"

"Why, I was wondering, messmate, why you never asked that before."

"My thoughts were too full of getting away."

"Ah, of course."

"What is her name?"

"The *Westward Ho!* She was formerly the *Seamew*, and the owner re-christened her."

"What's his name?"

"The skipper's? Why, Captain John Wiloughby."

"The owner's?"

"Mr. Jack Harkaway."

Had a thunderbolt dropped down in the hold between them, Hunston could not have been more astonished.

"What?"

His tone startled the sailor.

He saw it, and he did his utmost to calm himself.

"Who did you say?"

"Who?" echoed the sailor. "Why, who but Mr. Jack Harkaway? He's well known enough. Surely you don't mean for to go for to say as you never heard of him?"

"I—I think I have heard the name," muttered Hunston.

"Think! Well, so do I, unless you've been shut up in solitary confinement for the last fifteen years. Blow me tight, but the man that hadn't heard of Mr. Jack Harkaway would be a living curiosity."

"Jack Harkaway the owner of this ship?" Hunston murmured, like one in a dream, and relapsed into silence once more.

No wonder that he had seen that vision.

No wonder that the spirit of the murdered boy, young Jack, should hover about the vessel where his destroyer was hiding—in which his father, mother and all that he held dear in life were journeying.

The situation grew graver than ever.

It was truly an alarming plight, and the more he thought it over, the more desperate did he become.

"Jack Tiller," said he.

"Your honor."

"I'll stay where I am."

"Oh, very good," replied the tar; "mum's the word. I thought your berth wasn't over cheerful."

Jack Tiller gave a hoist at his slacks, and with something between a sigh and a grunt, he wheeled around and went on deck.

* * * * *

"If I could only see my way out of this, I should like better than anything to fire the ship," said Hunston, to himself; "fire it and watch it close by, chuckling at them while they roasted. What a glorious return it would be for them. By the powers, it is about the only thing I could do to wipe them all off at once, all—all! Jack, Havy, Emily, that Yankee braggart—curse him!"

And Hunston sat brooding in the black and evil-smelling hold day after day.

The only companion of his solitude being his own dark thoughts, his vicious resolves for vengeance.

"It is my own cursed ill-luck," he would say to himself again and again, "to be beholden to this Harkaway for my life. Why, even now, he has saved me again, saved me in spite of himself. That's the merry side of the question."

Merry as it was, it never made him smile.

One dreadful thought filled his mind.

One fearful fancy took such complete possession of him, that day and night he was brooding over it.

"Once let me see a clear landing," he would mutter to himself, "once let me see my way straight to get ashore in a safe place, and then I'll make the *Westward Ho!* too hot to hold them. Too hot—ah, yes, a precious deal too hot to hold them, that I would; for I would make up such a blaze as they would never be able to extinguish."

And so he began devoting himself to the arrangements for his villainous purpose.

What is more, he got all his plans mapped out, all ready for the execution of this most diabolical deed.

Little did the happy passengers in the *Westward Ho!* dream of the fatal danger threatening them.

They would not have enjoyed so many sweet slumbers, could they have had the faintest inkling of the truth—if they had suspected that near them was the villain Hunston, following them with a deadly purpose of revenge, which seemed to have increased year by year over since the schooldays of Jack Harkaway.

CHAPTER V.

YOUNG JACK'S CONFIDENCES—HOW TWO INNOCENT CONSPIRATORS REPENTED—A CHANCE SHOT STRIKES HOME.

"HARRY," said young Jack, as they walked up and down the deck arm in arm, "I must tell you something that has been upon my mind for days past."

Harry Girdwood turned around.

Young Jack's serious manner impressed him.

"What is it, Jack?"

"I know you'll laugh," began Jack.

"Do you, Jack?" returned Harry Girdwood, promptly; "that being the case, tell me at once. I like to laugh, as you know."

"Well, Harry, it hasn't made me laugh. I was lolling half drowsily over the hatchway there, the other evening, when I suppose I dropped off asleep, and I dreamt of Hunston. I dreamt that I was going through all that ugly scene again, and when in the thick of the dream, something woke me."

"Yes."

"What do you think it was?"

"Can't say."

"Hunston's voice, moaning, groaning with pain apparently."

Harry Girdwood opened his eyes in wonder at this singular speech.

"What are you talking about?"

"Nonsense, rubbish; is it not? So I thought since. But you know that sort of dream when you wake up with the vivid effect of your vision so strongly upon you, that the dream-drama appears to continue after you're awake?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is exactly what happened to me. I heard Hunston when I was awake."

There was something strangely impressive in his manner as he said this, which caught Harry Girdwood's attention in spite of himself.

"Fancy," he said, with an assumption of indifference which he was far from feeling; "fancy, my dear Jack."

"Of course," answered young Jack; "but very strange."

"Not exactly strange, either, everything considered, after all we have gone through. Why, Jack, you will hardly believe me when I tell you that I scarcely sleep without dreaming of Hunston. And what is there wonderful in that, after all that has taken place? It was enough

to shake the strongest nerves, to startle the bravest man that ever lived."

"You allude to the attempted execution of ourselves?" said young Jack.

"Yes, and in spite of that brave brigand girl's assurances, there was great danger when we stood upon the brink of our grave with a firing party aiming at us?"

"I felt a good deal of confidence in her," said Jack, "but I couldn't help thinking that an accident in her calculations might happen very easily."

"That's true. Supposing one of the bullets had been left in?"

"Why, one of us would have been food for worms by now, unless the wolves or bears had rooted us up out of our graves and made a dinner off us; but I haven't told you all about my vision, yet, Harry."

The latter looked a little bit uneasy.

"Did you dream again?"

"No."

"What more have you, then, to tell? Out with it. What else was it?"

"The moans I heard grew more distinct while I listened, and followed the sounds—"

"In your sleep?"

"No, awake. I followed the sounds to the hold."

"Well?"

"They were plainer heard there. I pushed my way over the barrels and boxes, and nosed down in all the corners with my bull's-eye lantern, when suddenly I heard a half-suppressed cry, a sigh, a gasp, rather as if some one had just suddenly found himself on the brink of a precipice, or had seen a ghost."

"Well—well."

"Well, at that very moment a hand was placed upon my arm."

"Yes."

"I started back and drew my dirk, and then I found myself attacking—"

"Mole!"

"No. Joe Basalt."

"Harry Girdwood burst out laughing at this."

"So it was Joe Basalt that was hiding and having a lark with you all the while?"

"I didn't say so," replied young Jack, thoughtfully.

"Why, then, what in the name of all that's wonderful, do you think it could have been?"

"I don't know, but Joe Basalt chaffed me. He swore I was walking in my sleep; but I have come back upon my old opinion since I have thought the job over."

"You mean that you actually believe there is some one concealed in the hold?"

"Is—or was. Now, you watch Joe Basalt, Harry, and see if there is not something very strange in his manner."

"I will, if you like, but—good morning, Tiller."

This was to Jack Tiller, who came hastily to them touching his hat.

"Good-morning, Master Jack—morning, Master Harry. We've got a fishing party on, gentlemen, and thought as you might like to join us."

"Who's going?"

"Me and Sam Mason, Tommy Shipwright, and Bill Adams, Joe Basalt and old Higgy—only that lot among the common folk," added he, with a grin.

"And who among the superior class?" asked young Jack, laughingly.

"Mr. Mole."

"What, Mr. Mole! Why, what on earth is he going for?"

"That's exactly the p'int of it, young gentlemen."

"How so?"

"We're going a-fishing with something new-fangled which Mr. Mole has invented."

The two boys looked at each other and grinned.

"Larks are on, Jack," said Harry Girdwood.

"I'm in it, for one."

"And I, too."

"That's your sort," cried Joe Basalt. "Mr. Harvey's going, too, and Mr. Jefferson; now I go to Mr. Harkaway and ask his consent."

And Joe left them, singing:

"Avast!" cries Jack, "do you suppose I ain't a man my dooty knows?
For liberty afore we goes
To ax the skipper I suppose."

And the well-disciplined sailor went to Harkaway's cabin and broached the question.

"All right, Basalt," said Harkaway; "only look sharp after the young gentlemen; you know what boys they are to get into mischief."

"All right, your honor; trust me."

"I do, Joe Basalt," responded Harkaway; "I

do, for I know that there was never a straighter or truer man ever trod a deck than you are."

"Come, I say, your honor," remonstrated Joe Basalt, modestly, "draw it mild."

"No deceit about you, I know it; nothing un-
derhanded about Joe Basalt."

A sudden thought flashed through the sailor's head, and it brought up a very unpleasant reminder.

With it came a flush to his bronzed face.

He touched his forelock respectfully to Harkaway and ran up stairs.

As he went he muttered to himself:

"I felt like a miserable swab!" he muttered; "a d—d deceitful son of a sea cook—that's what you are, Joe Basalt. I wish I'd never had nothing to do with that precious stowaway."

CHAPTER VI.

SHARK FISHING—BILLY LONGBOW'S YARNS—TELL WHAT TO THE MARINES—A NOVEL BAIT—HOW MR. MOLE HAD THE LAUGH HIS OWN WAY.

THE fishing expedition consisted of two boat loads.

To wit, the pinnace and the cutter.

In the former were Jefferson, Dick Harvey and four sailors.

In the cutter were young Jack, Harry Girdwood, Mr. Mole, Joe Basalt, Sam Mason and Jack Tiller.

"Now, Jack," said Mr. Mole, settling himself comfortably at the rudder lines, "and you, too, my dear Harry, you know, of course, we are going shark fishing. You understand what that is?"

"I know what a shark is, if you mean that," answered young Jack.

"Rather," said Harry, with a shudder at old recollections; "we had a white one after us once."

"A white shark!" said Mr. Mole, beaming upon the boat's crew generally. "*Squalus Carcharias*, the worst of the family."

"They ain't got no families, axing your pardon, Mr. Mole, sir," said Joe Basalt, "for they eat their own mothers and fathers, and children likewise."

"Why, Bill Longbow told me a yarn once, your honor," said Sam Mason, "about a white shark. I mean," he added, nodding at Mr. Mole respectfully, "a squarely cockylorium—a blessed rum name for a shark—as devoured all his family for dinner, supped off a Sunday school out for a pleasure trip in a steamboat, and was a-goin' to wind up with a meal off his own blessed self, when his dexter fin stuck in his swaller, and he brought hisself up ag'in."

A general laugh greeted this sally.

So boisterous was their mirth, that it caught the occupants of the other boat.

"That's Sam Mason, at one of his Billy Longbow yarns," cried a sailor in the pinnace.

"So you had a white shark after you in the water," said Mr. Mole. "Rather unpleasant, that."

"It was, indeed, unpleasant at such close quarters," said Harry Girdwood.

"Very close?" demanded Mr. Mole.

"Not further off than—"

"That squarely cockylorium is from you now, your honor," cried Sam Mason, pointing behind Mole.

The old gentleman looked quickly behind him, and there, paddling about the stern, was a monstrous white shark.

Mr. Mole slid off his seat to the bottom of the boat with wonderful celerity.

"Don't like the look of him?" said young Jack.

"Ho! I'll tackle him presently. But I—I slipped down," said Mr. Mole, innocently.

"So I see, sir."

"And I mean to show you some novel sport in the way of shark fishing," said the old gentleman.

"You?"

"Yes."

He had brought a large hamper with him, which he now proceeded to unpack, the occupants of the boat looking on with great interest in the business.

"Billy Longbow told me a yarn once," said the irrepressible Sam Mason, "about a wooden-legged nigger."

Mr. Mole looked up.

"What?"

"A wooden-legged nigger," repeated Sam Mason, touching his forelock respectfully at Mole. "No offense, your honor, to your legs."

"Oh, no."

"Go on, Sam," said young Jack, laughing; "out with Billy Longbow's yarn."

"This nigger was stumping along the banks of the Nile one day, when who should he meet but

a blessed big crockydile about a hundred feet long."

"Oh!"

"Draw it mild, Sam."

"Well, that's what Billy Longbow said—a hundred feet long."

"Oh, damme!" cried Joe Basalt, "make it ninety-nine, Sam, for decency sake."

"I won't give in half a foot," persisted Sam.

"Well, when Snowball sees Muster Crockydile so near as there was no getting out of the way, he says: 'You just wait a bit, Massa Crock, I'll gib yah suffin to sniff at. An' so, without more ado, he unscrews one of his wooden legs, and walks into the animal's jaws."

"Oh—ho—ho!"

A general groan of incredulity.

"Absurd," said Mr. Mole, without looking up from his task of watching, in case the shark should again show itself.

"A fact, sir," said Sam Mason. "Well, he held up his wooden leg perpendicular, and the greedy crock comes on with a snap, but the wooden leg was a trifle more than he could get over; there it stuck, and propped his great ugly maws wide open; out crawls Snowball, a kind of sorter modern Jonah, none the worse for it."

"Bravo, Sam!"

"Ho! it is quite true, for it's Billy Longbow's version of it," said the modest Sam.

"And is that all?"

"Not quite. He squatted down upon his stump, and prodded the crock in the eye with the other wooden leg until he caved in."

"Oh, ho—ho! Sam—Sam!" they cried in a chorus.

By the time the laugh had subsided, Mr. Mole was ready with his novel fishing apparatus.

Novel, indeed.

He took a soda water bottle, filled with gunpowder and tightly corked, and through the cork was a twisted wire that was attached to the line.

The other end of the line was a small square box, which was furnished with four handles, similar to that of a barrel organ.

One of these handles was to pay out line, another was for winding in.

"And the other two?" demanded Harry Girdwood.

"Simple enough," said Mr. Mole; "this box is a battery, and in my line is a conductor that goes through the cork into the powder. When I feel a tug, a turn or two of my handle here sends a spark into the powder, and our friend the *Squalus Carcharias* gets a good deal more than he has time to digest."

"I begin to see."

"Really, it is a very great plan, Mr. Mole."

"Now for the pork."

He had provided himself with a large morsel of fat in a flat strip, and this he proceeded to tie around the soda water bottle with twine.

When this was done, he put out about thirty feet of his telegraphic line, and then hurled his novel bait out to sea.

They looked eagerly out in the direction, and saw the great sea monster dive swiftly after it.

Then its huge carcass was clearly perceived in the limpid water turning over.

Mole waited a moment.

The line tightened.

"Now for it."

He gave two of his handles several vicious twists.

There was a shock, and a kind of water-spout not far off.

Mole chuckled quietly, and wound in his line.

"Do you think it has succeeded?" demanded young Jack, anxiously.

"Do I think, do I know? Of course it has."

They watched the place eagerly, and in the space of a few minutes the carcass of the huge white shark, completely rent asunder, rose to the surface of the water, and floated about.

"Damme!" ejaculated Joe Basalt, "if that ain't the queerest fishing I ever come nigh."

"And ain't Mr. Mole the best fisherman you ever see?"

"That he is."

"Let's give him a cheer; hip—hip—hip!"

"Hurrah!"

And they towed the vanquished shark alongside the *Westward Ho!* while Isaac Mole became the hero of the day.

CHAPTER VII.

MORE DEEDS OF DARING—HOW JEFFERSON SHOWED UP IN AN EMERGENCY—SINGLE COMBAT AND ITS RESULT—MR. MOLE TO THE FORE WITH A FRESH FEAT ON THE LONGBOW.

"THEY'VE got a bite in the cutter," said Harry.

They had, and it seemed to be a strong one.

They had got a Tartar.

A big fish was hooked, and dragging their boat through the water at a furious rate.

"We must go and lend them a hand," said young Jack.

They laid down to their work, and were soon upon the scene of the strife.

Ay, strife is the correct expression.

Strife it was.

A steam tug could not have dragged them along at a better pace, or have made resistance more hopeless.

"Pull hard."

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Lay down to it, my lads," cried old Mole, excitedly; "look how they are flying through the water."

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"I remember Billy Longbow once," began Mason.

"Hang Billy Longbow, now!" said Joe Basalt.

"Yes, let's bag this fish first and then—"

"Ain't Mr. Mole got another of his soda-water bottles?"

"Lots of bait," replied Mr. Mole; "but the tackle ain't up to the mark."

"Now he's slackening."

"Yes—he's getting blown."

"Now he rises."

So he did.

As they spoke the flight of the cutter was checked and a huge shark rose to the surface of the water for air.

A couple of fowling pieces gave him a warm greeting, but without appearing to damage him much.

The pinnace now pulled sharply around, and Young Jack, standing up on the head of the boat, held the harpoon ready for use when they should be within reach.

The moment was soon found.

The harpoon flew from his grasp whizzing through the air, and struck the quarry.

Tough as his hide was, the harpoon would not be denied admission.

The shark snorted as it was struck, and dived down, down, until the line grew taut.

Had there been but a single line to hold the voracious monster in check, it would have been but little use, so violent was the struggle, and so desperate was the strain.

But the two lines worked well together now.

Much as the shark objected to their coming, he had no choice but to cruise about within the comparatively narrow limits of the tether.

"Beast!" said Dick Harvey, snapping a pistol as it rose once more to the surface.

"You take a thundering lot of killing."

"This must be settled," said Jefferson.

"How?"

"I'll show you," returned the Yankee, promptly.

He drew his bowie, and watching the shark intently for a moment, he sprang over the boat's side into the sea.

A cry of horror arose from one and all.

What could this mean?

Suicide—the maddest suicide that ever man had contemplated.

Nothing could save him now.

Nothing.

"Jefferson!" ejaculated Harvey.

"Hush!" cried one of the sailors, with suppressed excitement; "don't worrit. Let him have the same chance as the shark at any rate."

It wanted a bold fellow to do such a deed as this, but Jefferson was a bold fellow, few bolder.

He was no braggart; but his self-confidence was amazing, and it brought him through many and many a desperate strait.

Would it bring him through this present affair?

Doubtful—sadly doubtful, indeed.

The wounded shark caught sight of the intrepid American, and all heedless of its hurts, dived after him.

The spectators held their breaths.

Jefferson rose to the surface in an instant, drew a long breath, and then down he plunged again.

Barely was he under when up came the shark snorting, puffing, and blowing.

There was a momentary pause just then.

Then its huge tail dashed the water into foam and rolled over, the water surrounding it being crimson with its life blood.

"That's another gone coon," said Sam Mason, exultingly.

As he spoke, Jefferson shot up to the boat's side, where half a dozen eager hands dragged him in.

"Phew!" he said, shaking the water from his

face and head, "that beast has cost me my knife and my cutlass."

He had sheathed them both in the shark before the ugly beast was done with.

The spectators gave him a cheer.

"That's sharp work, Jack," said Harry Girdwood.

"Sharp, indeed."

"It wants a quick hand and a sharp eye."

"And it has got it, too, there," said Isaac Mole, enthusiastically; "the smartest performance I've seen for many a long day."

Jefferson nodded and smiled at the speaker.

"Thank'ee Mr. Mole," said he, "such praise is indeed gratifying coming from you, the real hero of the day."

Mr. Mole was radiant with smiles at this.

"Jefferson," said the old gentleman, in his most condescending and patronizing manner, "you remind me of myself in my best days."

The boat's crew generally laughed at this.

But Mr. Mole was not at all abashed.

"Really, Mr. Mole," said Jefferson, "you flatter."

"Not I," protested Mr. Mole: "I rarely remember doing a neater thing myself."

"Indeed!"

"Truly."

"Is it possible?"

"What magnanimity!"

"Humility itself," ejaculated another.

The exaggeration of their expressions of wonderment as well as admiration did not at all upset Mr. Mole's moral equilibrium.

He had a very large swallow for admiration, and he pleased to take it all as his legitimate due.

"The only thing which can at all compare to Mr. Jefferson's gallant deed was an adventure that I will tell you of," said he, modestly. "I was on a whaling expedition up north—"

"Whaling?"

"You!"

"Yes—yes, I, Jack. What is there surprising in that?"

"Nothing, sir," responded young Jack; "only I was not aware you had ever done anything in that line."

"Now, how can you expect to know all my past career, my dear boy?"

"Of course, sir."

"Whaling, I repeat. We were chasing an enormous spermaceti whale. I was carrying the harpoon and tackle, and as we got within range I let fly at him with all my force. Now, perhaps I ought not to say it, but there were not many men who could approach me in handling the harpoon. I spitted the animal clean through the middle."

"Dear me!"

"No sooner did he feel himself struck than he sounded. Out went the line, but hang me if I could pay out fast enough, for he jerked me clean off my perch into the water."

"Dreadful!"

"Shocking!"

Mr. Mole smiled grimly.

"Not so bad as it sounds, after all," he said. "It startled me a bit, as you may suppose."

"It would, of course," said Dick, tipping the wink to Jefferson.

"But I had got back my presence of mind in half a crack, so I hauled in my line until I found myself on the whale's back. There I stuck on like grim death, jobbing and stabbing away with one hand, while I held on to the hilt of the harpoon with the other. I had only a dirk or short sword with me, but it was quite long enough for the whale."

"No doubt—no doubt!" exclaimed Dick, apparently enraptured at the narrative.

"In a few minutes I had jobbed all the go out of him, and he floated on the top of the water dead as a bloater with me on the top, rather blown with being so long under water, but with that excepted, not much the worse for it."

"Wonderful!"

"Marvelous!"

"A miracle!"

Such were the mildest tributes of admiration which Mr. Mole's fanciful reminiscence drew forth.

"You must have shipped a good lot of water, your honor," said Jack Tiller.

"That I did."

"More water than your honor has ever took since."

Mr. Mole half smelled a lurking sarcasm in this, but the honest tar's face showed no signs of slyness.

The only evidence of its being a dig at Mr. Mole's well-known weakness for strong waters was to be found in the merry twinkling of the listeners' eyes.

"I remember something that happened to Billy Longbow—" began Sam Mason.

"Avast, Sam!" interrupted Jack Tiller; "Billy Longbow ain't in it with Mr. Mole at a yarn."

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNSTON'S TRIALS IN THE HOLD OF THE "WESTWARD HO!"—THE SHINE WITH HIS PROTECTORS—A STRANGE REVELATION—TROUBLES.

HUNSTON was, meanwhile, getting into a very bad state of mind and body.

The mechanical arm was resuming its invidious advance—its mysterious yet none the less terrible attack.

"I feel that I am going off the hooks," he would mutter to himself, grimly, from time to time. "I shall put my old enemy, Jack Harkaway, to the trouble of burying me after all."

"Well, one good turn deserves another. I buried his brat, he shall bury me. Only he won't get as much for doing for me as I did for his son."

He little dreamed that both young Jack and Harry Girdwood were upon that ship.

He had seen young Jack once, and then his fears were so excited that they obtained a complete mastery over his cooler judgment.

He took him for his own apparition.

* * * * *

Joe Basalt and Jack Tiller felt unhappy.

They had long learned to repent of their slyness in concealing the stowaway on board the *Westward Ho*:

Honest Joe Basalt and rough-and-ready Jack Tiller consulted daily over the dilemma into which they had fallen.

"Hark ye, Jack," said his pal, Basalt, "we've bin an' made h'asses of ourselves in getting that chap aboard, but our dooty is clear now."

"What's that?"

"To go and make a clean breast of it to the skipper."

"But the cove himself seemed so partic'lar averse to that."

"Cos why? Ain't he bin telling lies by the pint measure? He's bin humbugging of us," persisted Basalt.

"Let's go and talk reasonable to him, then," said Tiller, "for this must come to an end. Damme if I don't feel as if I'd been an' done a hanging job at the very least."

They went to the hold and found Hunston.

The appearance of the wretched stowaway was by this time something dreadful.

"We have come to the conclusion, mister," said Joe Basalt, "that there is nothing for it but to let the skipper know all."

Hunston pricked up his ears at this.

"Do what?" he exclaimed, violently. "Split upon me, would ye?"

"That's a rum word to use," said Joe Basalt. "You are precious feverish, and if you only was to see our skipper and let him know what you told us when we picked you out of the water, he would help you—"

"To a halter," muttered the castaway.

"Did you speak?"

"No, Tiller, not I; I was only saying that he wouldn't care to see me, so drop it."

"We can't."

"Can't," repeated Joe Basalt, doggedly.

"Then listen to me," exclaimed Hunston, starting up with new energy; "if you tell a word about me to anyone it will be a breach of faith, and I shall resent it."

"Resent! How?"

"Easily."

"Well, if you means threatening me, I may as well tell you I ain't afeared of no man, and when you gets around and pulls up your strength again, I shall be happy to have half an hour with you quiet and comfortable, and my pal, Jack Tiller, shall stand by and see fair play."

And honest Joe rolled up his shirt sleeves, showing to the villain, Hunston, a pair of powerful and brawny arms.

"I don't mean that," said Hunston.

"But I do."

"And so do I," added Jack Tiller.

"I mean to say that if you betray me to Harkaway or to any of the party, I shall make a point of letting them know that you have kept me snug here so long because you were well paid for it, and it may not please your master, perhaps, to learn that you are doing a little passenger traffic upon your own account; and what's better, sticking to the money you make over it."

This staggered the two sailors not a little.

"You lying, black-hearted swab," ejaculated Tiller, when he had got his breath. "Would you dare?"

Hunston curled his lip contemptuously.

"Dare!"

"Why, you sneaking, lying Judas," cried Joe Basalt.

"Lying!" echoed Hunston; "is it not true?"

"No."

"Not true that I paid you for saving me and bringing me here?"

"Yes—but—"

"But—but—but pickles. The tale I shall tell will speak for itself."

"Then, damme, you shall try it on now," ejaculated the exasperated Joe Basalt, moving toward the companion-ladder.

But before he could get any further, Hunston sprang upon him, knife in hand.

"Hold!"

"Stand aside," cried Joe.

"When you have sworn not to utter a word, but not till then—not till then."

The two sailors stared at each other in surprise at this outburst.

"Well, Joe," exclaimed his comrade, "did you ever see such a black-hearted villain?"

"Not I. But out of the way with you, swab, or, damme, I'll make small biscuit of you!"

So saying, he ran at Hunston, and knocked the knife out of his hand.

Hunston endeavored to close with him.

But the temporary strength with which his fury had invested him vanished suddenly, and he fell to the ground a dull, heavy load.

They ran to raise him.

To their dismay they discovered that he was breathless—lifeless.

"He's dead!"

"Is he? Then by the Lord Harry, we must go and fetch the doctor, or we shall get into an awful mess. Stay here, Joe, awhile. I'll go up and see for the doctor."

"Stop a bit," said Joe Basalt, feeling the stowaway's chest. "He's not dead yet. I can feel something moving here. Yes, it's beating."

"He's only fainting, then."

"Yes."

"Quite enough, too. I'll go up and let them know, before he can go on again about it."

Up he ran.

Joe Basalt used his best exertions to bring the swooning man around.

* * * * *

Tiller found Harkaway on deck.

"Might I have half a word with your honor?"

"A dozen, if you like, Tiller," said old Jack, turning from the party of daring fishermen, who had been relating their deeds of daring with the sharks, and were quite elated with the narrations which they had been giving.

Jack Tiller hummed and ha'd, and looked uneasy, and so he pulled his forelock, and spluttered out:

"Please, sir, I've been and gone on like a darned bad lot, your honor."

"Tiller!"

"Yes, your honor, I have. I've been and let a berth here on board, and stuck to the money—leastways, that's what the passenger himself says, though, the Lord help me, I hadn't the least idea of doing such a thing; not I. I took a poor drowning wretch in, and I put him below in the hold to keep him snug, and—"

Here Harkaway interrupted him with a cry of wonder and astonishment.

"What, Tiller, you mean to say you have a stowaway on board the *Westward Ho*?"

"Yes, your honor," responded the frightened mariner.

"You have done very wrong, Jack Tiller," said Harkaway, "very wrong indeed."

"I know I have, though the Lord help me, if I thought of wronging any man. The poor devil, in gratitude, offered me money, and I took it; and now I feel as if I had been robbing your honor, that's all. But I'll be glad to hand over the money, and so will my pal, Joe Basalt."

"Joe!"

"Yes."

"Is he in it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You surprise me."

"Devil a bit do I wonder at that, sir. We're a thieving, dishonest lot, sir, little as I thought it, sir."

Old Jack smiled at this.

"Well—well," he said, after a moment's reflection, "we'll go deeper into that question when we have seen your stowaway."

"This way, sir," said the worthy Tiller.

Old Jack followed him down below.

On reaching the hold he found Joe Basalt, kneeling up in the corner over the wretched stowaway, who was still in a deep swoon.

"How is he?" asked Tiller. "Any better yet?"

"No."

"Fainted again?"

"Yes—hush! don't make a row."

"Here's the governor, Joe," said Jack Tiller.

Joe Basalt turned around with a start, and hung his head abashed.

"It's all right, Joe," said Harkaway. "Don't worry any more about it; only you were wrong to conceal it from me, that's all. And now let us look at the patient. He is ill, Jack Tiller tells me."

"Yes, your honor."

"Turn your lantern upon his face."

The sailor opened his bull's eye.

As its glare flashed upon the half-swooning man he opened his eyes.

The recognition was mutual—yes, and instantaneous.

The stowaway glared fiercely upwards, and uttered but one word:

"Harkaway!"

"Hunston!"

CHAPTER IX.

GOOD FOR EVIL—AN UNEXPECTED STROKE OF LUCK FOR HUNSTON.

HARKAWAY, the noble and generous, and Hunston, the villain from boyhood to manhood—face to face!

After all these changes and trials and vicissitudes.

After all these acts of villainy, treachery, and cruelty upon the part of the miserable wretch Hunston.

After so many acts of daring and heroism upon the part of our dashing old hero, Jack Harkaway.

Not a word was spoken for some moments.

This strange encounter literally deprived them of the power of utterance.

It was unexpected to both of them.

Startling—appalling was it to Hunston, upon regaining consciousness, to find himself face to face with the man of all others he dreaded and hated most.

Need we say why?

No.

The reader has not, of course, forgotten that Hunston was ignorant of the two boys' preservation.

Little did he dream that those two destined victims had, by little less than a miracle, escaped his vengeance.

Bitter indeed, therefore, were his feelings now, for he fully believed that young Jack was in his grave in the Greek mountains.

Under any ordinary circumstances he would have felt tolerably easy, for well as he knew what an ugly customer was Jack Harkaway in a tussle, he was also aware that Jack would not take advantage of an enemy's powerless condition, no matter how deep the wrongs inflicted.

The murder of Harkaway's boy, Hunston well knew, was a crime which Harkaway would never look over.

His fate was sealed.

So deeply was he convinced of this that he would have lain violent hands upon himself if he had had the power.

But the crowning crime of self-murder he was powerless to commit.

"So, Hunston," said Harkaway, sternly, "we meet face to face once more."

Hunston was silent.

What could he say?

"What new villainy brought you here?" said Harkaway. "What fresh act of deviltry had you in contemplation when you got on board my vessel?"

Hunston gave him a sickly and scornful smile.

"Do you suppose that I knew where I was?"

"Yes."

Hunston stared.

"Then all I have to say is, that you haven't improved in wit or wisdom with increasing years. Why, the merest chance brought me here. I am not guilty of gratitude, as a rule, you will say."

"True."

"You haven't the satisfaction of saying it," retorted Hunston, quickly; "I have said it for you. But the two men who hid me here had no idea who I was. Being hard pressed on shore—where you made it too hot to hold me—I took to the water, and when I was nearly sinking, I hailed their boat. They took me in and—"

"And you returned the compliment."

"How?"

"By taking them in," said Harkaway.

"They hid me away here to do me a service. I made my tale good to them. As my time, I

feel, is nearly up in this world, I don't want to do them any wrong."

Harkaway listened in some astonishment. The wretch's allusion to his approaching end thrilled Harkaway strangely.

"Do you feel so ill?" he asked.

Hunston smiled sardonically at this.

"Nearly all over," was his reply. "Laugh away—laugh away!"

"Hush, miserable man, hush!" exclaimed Harkaway. "You have known me nearly all my life; you knew me as a schoolboy and as a man."

"Yes."

"And no one has better reason than you to know that Jack Harkaway does not fight with helpless enemies, still less does he rejoice over the suffering of the worst foe he ever had."

Hunston looked up.

A faint gleam of hope appeared in this.

But no; it was impossible.

Too well he knew that his life was forfeited.

But while he was ruminating thus, Harkaway had sent one of the men up on deck to fetch the doctor.

In the course of two or three minutes the man returned, accompanied by the ship's surgeon.

"A stowaway, on board the *Westward Ho!*" said the doctor, as he entered the hold; "I should sooner have expected to find one on board a man-of-war."

"Examine him, please, doctor," said Harkaway, anxiously, "and let us know how he is."

The doctor made no reply, but proceeded without any fuss or demonstration to feel the sick man's pulse.

"Very low," he said; "in a bad way. We must get him up out of this place, for it is enough to choke a black."

He was tended as carefully as if he had been one of their best friends, instead of the bitterest, the most treacherous of their enemies; and, strange to relate, Jack Harkaway appeared not a little concerned about the villain's welfare.

"Do you think that there is any danger?" he asked.

"Immediate, do you mean?" said the doctor.

"Yes."

"Humph! I can scarcely say. Not exactly immediate, perhaps, if care be taken."

"You think he will live?"

"Unless the fever which has set in should take an unfavorable turn. He is constitutionally strong."

"I know that."

The doctor looked at Harkaway in some surprise.

"You are a bit of a doctor, Mr. Harkaway?"

Jack smiled.

"A very small bit," he answered; "only I have known this man nearly all my life."

"Indeed!"

The doctor's manner invited confidence, and it was quite clear that his curiosity had been awakened.

Harkaway thought it over quickly and quietly, and he came to the conclusion that he could not do better than let the doctor participate in the secret.

"You are surprised that an old acquaintance of mine should be here on board my ship, lurking and skulking as a stowaway."

"Well," answered Doctor Anderson, in a constrained manner, "if I confess the honest, plain truth, I am."

"It is simple enough; the man did not know that he was on my vessel, or it would be about the last vessel in the world he would have chosen for refuge."

"Refuge?"

"Yes; refuge is the word. Now, I am the worst man in the world at half confidences. Tell me, are you a good man to keep a secret, doctor?"

"I am."

"Then I may tell you something that will rather startle you."

"You will?"

"Yes. That poor wretch you have the charge of is the worst enemy that I have. It is my old schoolfellow, Hunston."

"Hunston?"

"Yes. You remember the name, I perceive."

"I do. But is it possible that the villain has the audacity to venture here?"

"No; that is just what he would not do. He took to the water, being hardly pressed by his enemies."

"Why, if your men knew who it was, they would tear him piecemeal."

"Exactly; and that's what I wanted to speak

of to you, doctor. We must take every care not to let them know."

"Really, you are as careful of him as though he were a cherished friend."

"Not quite," answered Harkaway; "only I don't care to drop on a helpless enemy, even such a viper as this Hunston."

"But he is such an utterly bad lot."

"True; and I should not feel the slightest compunction at taking his life in a tussle, in a fair, stand-up fight; but what I can't do, is taking a man's life when he is helpless at my mercy."

The doctor saw that Harkaway did not wish to discuss it further, and so he contented himself with obeying orders; and so Hunston got restored to health in the ship of his old schoolfellow, the man whom he had injured most deeply.

Care and skill of the first description were lavished upon him.

But for this, Hunston would probably have languished and died wretchedly upon the coast of Greece, unless an accident had thrown him into the power of the authorities.

In that case, his destiny would have been speedily accomplished.

His end—the scaffold.

CHAPTER X.

HUNSTON'S PROGRESS—MISGIVINGS—THE WARNINGS FROM THE GRAVE.

"MR. HARKAWAY."

"Doctor."

"A word with you, if convenient, sir."

"Certainly, doctor," returned old Jack.

And they walked on deck together.

"It is only concerning the patient."

"What of him?"

"There is something concerning that mechanical arm which completely baffles me. It is poisoned, I fear."

"You astonish me," said Harkaway.

While they were talking this over, young Jack dropped into the cabin.

Now, the boy knew better than anybody the history of the mechanical arm.

It will not be forgotten by the reader that the death of Robert Emmerson occurred on board the pirate vessel during the captivity of young Jack Harkaway and Harry Girdwood.

Although so many adventures have been gone through since then, you cannot have forgotten that during their captivity Hunston and Toro had striven might and main to compass the poor boys' destruction.

It is needless to recall to the reader's recollection that it was during that time that this wondrous work was perfected by Robert Emmerson, and that during that time his work was the indirect cause of his death.

The legend of the steel arm was not forgotten by the boys.

* * * * *

"This arm was made by the notorious Protean Bob," said young Jack to his father. "You remember Protean Bob?"

"Yes."

"He was a highly-skilled mechanician, it appears, and he gave himself thoroughly up to the manufacture of this arm."

"It certainly is a marvelous piece of work," said Doctor Anderson.

"The strangest part of the story is," said young Jack, "that only the inventor knows the exact working of it, and that there is concealed in the springs something deadly to avenge the inventor should the wearer of the arm ever prove wanting in gratitude. And Hunston, as you know—"

"Never troubled any one with gratitude."

"No, indeed," said Doctor Anderson, reflectively; "the strangest part of that is, he never misses an opportunity of railing against you."

"Against me!" said Harkaway.

"Ungrateful ruffian!" exclaimed Harvey, who entered just as this was spoken.

"He thinks when he gets well, you will take his life, for he is still ignorant of the boys being here, or of their lives being saved," said the doctor.

"I see—I see," said young Jack; "he doesn't know that we escaped the death which he fancied so sure. He ought to suffer for that."

"Hush!" said old Jack. "He is punished enough already."

"Not quite. I don't think he could be punished enough," said Harry Girdwood.

"Nor I."

"Stop—stop," said Harkaway, seriously; "I have suffered more than all of you, at the hands of this man, and if I can forgive him, surely you can."

* * * * *

Now, as Hunston gained strength, his old evil passions returned in their full force.

The nurses appointed to attend his bedside, were the two sailors who had rescued him from a watery grave, honest Joe Basalt and his friend, Jack Tiller.

These two bluff tars had been appointed to the post for reasons which the reader will readily comprehend.

They had received a long lesson from old Jack and from the doctor, too.

They were forbidden to mention certain matters, and although Hunston would wheedle and cross-examine with the skill of an Old Bailey lawyer, he quite failed to get any information from them.

"At any rate," exclaimed the patient in utter despair, "you don't mind telling me whither we are bound."

"Oh, yes, I do," returned Joe Basalt, who was on duty for the time being.

"Why?"

"Can't tell."

"You don't think that Harkaway means to—"

"Mister Harkaway, if you please," interrupted Joe Basalt, surlily.

"Well then, Mr. Harkaway," said Hunston, impatiently.

"That's better."

"You don't think that he means to hand me over to the authorities at the nearest port, do you?"

Joe was mum.

"Eh?"

Not a word.

Hunston still remained in ignorance of the presence of the two boys—ay, even of their very existence.

* * * * *

"Massa Jack," said Sunday to our youthful hero, one morning, "we often gib poor ole Daddy Mole a teasing, sir, a frightening."

Young Jack grinned.

"We have."

"Ought he not to get off easier dan dat dam skunk, dat Hunston fellar?"

"Yes, but you wouldn't recommend joking with him as we do with Mr. Mole?"

"No; I'd let it be no joke, Massa Jack; I'd just frighten him out of his darned skin, dat's all."

Harry Girdwood was taken into their confidence, and a fine plot was agreed upon.

The only difficulty was the sailor nurse.

Joe Basalt was on guard again.

They gave Joe Basalt a good stiff tumbler of grog—and where is the sailor who could resist that—and oh, wickedness! the grog was hoccus-ed.

In plainer language, that means drugged.

Not very long after drinking their healths in a bumper, old Joe felt drowsy and he fell asleep.

The patient slept, and would not have awakened probably for some hours had not the two negroes, Sunday and Monday, set up a most unearthly moaning noise.

The pitch was low and thrilling, and not the pleasantest thing for a man to hear with a conscience laden with guilt as was the wretched man Hunston's.

The sick man was for some time oblivious of the sounds which were going on for his special ear.

But after a certain delay it began to tell.

He moaned.

Then moved.

Then turned upon his back.

"Hunston—Hunston—oh, Hunston!" Sunday groaned. "Awake!"

And then the two darkeys would groan together.

A responsive moan from Hunston was heard.

He opened his eyes, moaned and groaned, and awoke wakeful at once.

And when he awoke'

His startled eyes fell upon two awful and awesome figures.

The two boys, young Jack and Harry Girdwood, standing hand in hand, their faces bearing the ghastly pallor of the grave, and their brows smeared with blood.

In the darkened cabin a flickering, phosphorescent light played upon them, a hint which had perhaps been borrowed from the practical joking in the chamber of the sham necromancer in Greece.

The two victims glared upon the sick man, while he could only stare in fearful silence.

He stared.

Then he closed his eyes and rubbed them, and opened them again, as if to assure himself that it was real.

But they never moved.

Never spoke.

He essayed to speak.

But his tongue refused to wag.

It stuck to the roof of his mouth.

The perspiration stood out upon his brow in thick beads.

Presently, when a sound came from him, it was a dull, hollow moan of anguish, that sounded like the echo of some "yawning grave."

A sound which seemed to contain the pent-up agony of a whole lifetime of suffering.

But his tormentors were merciless.

They did not budge.

"Away, horrible creatures!" gasped the miserable wretch, in tones scarcely louder than a whisper. "Away and hide yourselves!"

And he strove to drag the coverlet over his head.

But there was a fearful fascination in it which forced him, in spite of himself, to look again.

"I know you are unreal," he faltered. "I know my mind is wandering—that I fancy it all—all. Begone—away!"

As well might he have invited them to shake him by the hand or to embrace him affectionately.

No.

There they stuck, glaring upon him with eyes full of hideous menace.

"What brings you here?" he said again. "Why do you come to torment me now? Rest in your graves. Away, I say—away!"

His manner grew more violent as he went on speaking.

"You had no mercy upon us," said young Jack; "and now remember when last we were upon earth."

A groan from Hunston was the only response.

"Beware!" said Harry Girdwood, in sepulchral tones. "Beware, I say!"

"Beware!" chimed in the others, as in one voice.

"I warned you that the time would come when you would beg for mercy of my father," pursued young Jack. "I told you that you should grovel in abject terror, and plead in vain—ay, in vain."

"Never!" retorted Hunston.

"To-morrow will show you."

"What?" cried Hunston, in feverish eagerness, while he dreaded to hear.

"Your fate."

"It is false."

"The rope is ready—the noose is run. You shall die a dog's death."

"And you shall die hard," added Harry Girdwood.

A groan, more fearful than any which had preceded, burst from the guilty wretch.

"But Harkaway will be merciful."

"As you were."

"No—no—no; he is full of forgiveness, I know."

"But not for crimes like yours."

"He could not pardon you, even if he would."

"Why not?" demanded Hunston, quickly.

"Because the crew would drag you piece-meal. No—no—no, Hunston; your fate is sealed. The rope is ready—the noose is waiting for you. In torment and in suffering you shall die the death of a rabid cur, the death of a loathsome reptile, of a poisonous thing of which it is true humanity to rid the earth."

He could hear no more.

With a moan of incalculable terror he dived under the beadclothes to shut out the fearful vision.

When he ventured forth again, they were gone.

Vanished!

They had returned as noiselessly as they had come.

* * * * *

"Basalt."

"Halloo!"

The drugged sailor fought with the opiate which had been administered to him, and opened his eyes.

"There's no one here, is there, Basalt? Tell me."

"What are you muttering about now?" demanded Joe Basalt, in his surliest tones.

"Are we alone?"

"Of course."

"I have had such an awful dream, my good friend," said Hunston, still on the shiver.

"Then keep it to yourself," retorted Joe. "I don't care the value of a ship's biscuit for your dream—yours nor anybody else's—so stow your gaff. Close your peepers, and let me get a few winks, if I can, always providing as I'm not troubling your honorable self."

Not even honest old Joe's withering irony could affect the patient, so profoundly pleased

was he to find the supernatural visitors gone—melted as it were into thin air.

Hunston turned on his side, muttering:

"If I had but the giant strength of Toro, I would soon take my revenge upon all this ship contains—yes, a deep and deadly revenge."

After a moment's silence, he again muttered:

"I wonder if the brigand Toro is alive or dead, or if I shall ever have his help to destroy my old enemy, Harkaway?"

CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN HUNSTON'S EVIL PROPENSITIES CATCH HIM IN A TRAP—DANGER—ANOTHER SHARK—MR. MOLE SUFFERS.

"I HAVE had such horrible dreams, doctor," said Hunston, the next morning.

"I don't much wonder at your dreams being ugly ones," replied the doctor, significantly.

Hunston coughed.

There was no mistaking the doctor's meaning.

The conversation hung for a moment.

"I can quite understand that you may dream of many things which would scarcely bear repetition."

"That's not the case," angrily retorted the patient.

"Indeed."

The end of it was the doctor treated the patient for the feverish symptoms which the tricks of the night had created, and as the day wore on, he got calmer and better.

Time wore on.

Days grew into weeks.

The mysterious ravages of the secret poison still baffled Doctor Anderson and prevented the complete restoration of the patient.

"There's something very extraordinary in this," the doctor would say to Hunston, "something which is quite beyond me. If we were not in the nineteenth century, I should almost be inclined to believe in a spell having been cast upon you."

Hunston winced.

"Upon me?"

"Yes; or rather upon that wonderful mechanical arm. I should almost think that the wearer was under a ban."

The doctor's words thrilled the listener strangely.

Little did he know that Dr. Anderson was well acquainted with the history of the mechanical arm, and of its ill-fated inventor, Robert Emerson.

Little did he think that the doctor's words were meant to produce the exact effect which they had.

The doctor's speech sank deeply into Hunston's mind, and he brooded day and night.

But although it did not affect his health, it certainly had a most unwholesome effect upon his mind, and the result of this soon made itself manifest.

* * * * *

That same afternoon the two boys and their tutor were on deck.

There was scarcely a breath of wind on the ocean, the sails were hanging loosely from the spars as the vessel rose and fell upon the swelling waves.

"What a country this is for sharks," exclaimed Mr. Mole, who was seated on the low bulwarks of the weather quarter, enjoying what little air there was, and carefully unloading his pocket pistol.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Mole," said Harry, "but what is the name of this particular country?"

Mole frowned horribly.

"You are a very impudent boy."

"No, sir, only a youth of an inquiring turn of mind. What is the chief city of this country?"

"I never answer absurd questions."

Mr. Mole took another suck at the pistol (i. e. flask), and then his countenance relaxed.

"It is a place for sharks, though," he said; "only look at that great fellow down here."

Harry looked, so did young Jack.

There was a monster of the deep moving slowly to and fro, occasionally coming up nearly to the surface, and then sinking apparently without an effort almost out of sight.

The fish was of greater size than those they had already killed.

He came up and looked at old Mole and then turned away, evidently thinking the worthy tutor much too old, lean and tough for his dainty stomach; but when he caught sight of Jack and Harry, he showed more animation.

Evidently they were more to his taste.

"I mean to have a try for him," said Jack.

"Do so, my boy. I shall make a sportsman of you yet, I see," observed Mr. Mole.

"You have certainly put us up to a wrinkle or two lately, sir."

"Bah! your father is considered a clever man in all that pertains to sporting, but what is he in comparison with me?"

Young Jack did not hear the conclusion of this speech, for he had gone away to get his fishing tackle, a large hook attached to a chain.

He quickly returned, and baited the hook with about ten pounds of beef that had gone a little queer in the bottom of the tub.

"Now, Mr. Sharkey, let us see if you can digest that," exclaimed Jack, as he dropped the hook overboard.

The shark looked at it closely, and then looked up at Jack, as though he would much prefer the fisher to the bait.

"It is no use, Jack," said Harry; "he is not hungry."

"Strikes me it is unskilfulness in angling, rather than want of appetite on the shark's part," remarked Mr. Mole.

"Would you like to have a try, sir?"

"Hem! well, I don't mind showing you how to do it," responded the professor.

Jack began to haul in the line, coiling it down just at Mole's feet, or rather where his feet should have been.

But Sharkey, finding himself in danger of losing his dinner, made a dart at the meat before it left the water, then discovering that the barb of the hook had stuck in his mouth, he darted off at a great rate, but sad to relate, the rope as it flew out over the bulwark, got twisted around one of Mr. Mole's stumps, and the worthy professor flew into the ocean.

For a wooden-legged man to swim well, or even to keep himself afloat by treading water, is a somewhat difficult task, and so Mr. Mole would have found it, had not Harry Girdwood promptly followed the advice given by a celebrated American:

"When you see a drowning man, throw a rail at him."

Harry threw a plank, and Mr. Mole being fortunate enough to clutch it, was thereby enabled to keep himself afloat.

But he was exposed to another danger.

The shark, being irritated by the rusty iron in his throat, was rushing hither and thither in a most furious manner, snapping his jaws in a way that made the spectators thankful they were on deck.

And then, turning on its back, it bit at Mole.

"Oh! the brute has taken my leg off."

The shark resumed its natural position, and held Mole's stump above water puzzled to know what to do with it.

"This is my fault," said young Jack, and seizing a cutlass, he leaped overboard.

"Lower away the boat," shouted Dick Harvey, who had just come on deck.

He and Jefferson had also armed themselves, and were about to leap in to young Jack's assistance, when Harkaway senior appeared.

"Hold! let no man here risk his life," he said.

"But—"

"But the excitement will do me good; I want a good fight to keep my spirits up."

While speaking he had thrown off his coat and shoes, and cutlass in hand, leaped to the rescue of his son and old Mole.

By this time, however, the boat had been lowered, and was pulling rapidly towards Mr. Mole, who still clung to his plank about thirty yards from the stern of the vessel.

Old Jack with a few powerful strokes reached him.

"Hold on, Mr. Mole; the boat is coming. You, youngster, swim out of the way at once."

"I'm going to fight the fish, dad."

"You are not. Away with you at once."

During this brief conversation the shark had been down out of sight. He now rose to the surface, and seeing three enemies, seemed undecided which to attack first.

And while the fish was hesitating, Harkaway resolved to open the campaign.

Accordingly, he dived with the intention of coming up beneath the fish, and administering a stab.

Old Jack Tiller and Joe Basalt were just at that moment engaged in hauling Mr. Mole into the boat: they had him half way over the gunwale, when the shark made a snap, and away went the professor's other leg.

"Mercy, help! The beast is devouring me by inches," screamed Mole, as he rolled headlong into the boat.

Joe Basalt, seeing that young Jack was still itching to have a go at the shark, seized him by the collar and dragged him in. They then rested on their oars and prepared to give the elder Harkaway any assistance they could.

"I lay five to three against the monster of the deep," said Harvey.

"I accept the wager on those terms," said Mole, who having discovered that he was un-hurt, was reviving.

He took another swig at the pistol and then sat up to watch the conflict.

The shark, finding he had now only one opponent to deal with, turned towards Harkaway, who dived again, and getting this time fairly beneath the fish, thrust his cutlass up to the hilt in its stomach.

Startled by this sudden attack, and smarting from the pain caused by the wound, the shark leaped up half way out of the water, and then fell with a loud splash close by Jack.

Every one on board was by this time on deck, watching the unequal struggle.

While the shark was twisting and turning to get at its adversary, Jack managed to give a second stab; but it was rather hot work though, for Jack was obliged to dive so frequently that he had little time to recover his breath.

He was just endeavoring to do so, when the shark made another rush at him.

Old Jack dived again, and young Jack would have been over to his father's assistance had not Joe Basalt forcibly restrained him.

A third stab made the shark feel very queer indeed.

In fact, Harkaway thought the fish was done for, and had struck out for the ship, but just as he grasped a rope and permitted himself to be drawn up, the shark recovered and made another most vicious dart at him.

Our hero, who had, in his time, vanquished so many foes, felt hardly inclined to let a shark get the best of him.

He dropped from the rope and sank beneath the waves just as the head of the brute emerged therefrom.

Then up again like a shot; and the keen cutlass tore its way through the vitals of the fish.

Then a fin was lopped off, and a few seconds afterwards the huge carcass was seen floating on the waves.

Harkaway seized the rope and fastened it around the head and tail of his vanquished foe, which was then hauled on deck.

"Bravo, old man," exclaimed Harvey, shaking his schoolfellow by the hand. "You did that well."

"Though you were certainly a long time about it," observed Mole. "I could have—"

"You could have paid me three sovs. by this time," replied Harvey, "so just out with the dust."

Mole made no reply.

Jefferson then added his congratulations.

"Pshaw!" said Jack. "Mr. Mole did it all."

"How?"

"Why, he poisoned the poor shark with one of his wooden legs. It's enough to make a fish disgusted with life."

A loud laugh followed.

"Meanwhile," said Mole, "will some one be good enough to give me a lift?"

The professor was hoisted up on deck, and when they had all changed their clothes, and the great shark-killer had shipped two new wooden pins, he grew quite as bouncy as ever.

Especially as the death of the last shark was still jocularly attributed to him.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD JOE PLOTS WITH HUNSTON—WHAT CAME OF THE PLOT.

THE Harkaway family and their guests were all assembled at dinner, after the shark-fishing, when the conversation turned upon their old enemy.

"I wish we were fairly rid of him," said Mrs. Harkaway, "for all the while he is on board, I feel as if some misfortune were hanging over us."

Jack smiled.

"Have you had any dreams, Emily?" he said, slyly.

"Don't learn to mock, sir," retorted the lady, with mock asperity. "You have been influenced by dreams yourself before now."

Jack looked serious.

"That's true."

"And we owe this wretched man nothing—"

"But hate."

"We do that," said Jefferson; "but he is a miserable wretch, and we can afford to let him off cheaply, without paying old scores."

"What do you wish to do, then?" demanded Harkaway. "I am willing to abide by the decision you may come to."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "I propose that he shall be put ashore."

"When?"

There was the rub.

They were many weary miles away from the sight of land.

"Put him ashore the first time that we come within reach of land," suggested Harvey.

"We will," said Harkaway, "if that is the general wish."

"It is."

It was put to the vote and found that everybody, without a single exception, was desirous of seeing the back of Hunston.

Who can wonder?

None.

"Well—well," said old Jack, "that is agreed upon. And now, Emily, my dear, I hope that your mind is at rest."

"Almost."

"What! doesn't that satisfy you yet?"

"For the present; but I shall be all the more satisfied when he is really out of the place altogether, for he is a regular nightmare to me."

"You are fanciful, my dear," said old Jack.

"Perhaps; but there have been times when you have not made so light of my presents," said Emily.

As these words were spoken, the saloon door was opened, and who should enter but Joe Basalt.

Now old Joe wore a face as long as a fiddle, and addressing Harkaway, he requested a few words in private.

"Presently, Joe," said Harkaway.

The old tar twisted his hat around and waited.

"What, won't presently do for you?"

"I'd sooner out with it at once," said Joe.

"Well, out with it," said Harkaway.

"Before everyone, your honor?" Joe demanded.

"Yes."

He looked slyly about him, and cast a furtive glance at the ladies before he ventured to speak out.

"I want to break it to your honor as gently as possible, and I want to know what your honor thinks of me."

Old Jack started.

"Why, really, Joe—"

"I think Joe wants to know if you think he's handsome," suggested Dick Harvey.

"Do you admire the cut of his figurehead?" chimed in young Jack.

But Joe Basalt was evidently to much upset and preoccupied by something on his mind to heed this chaff.

"No, your honor," he said, fiercely, "what I want to know is—do you consider me a d—d mutineering swab?"

"Joe—Joe," exclaimed Harkaway, laughing in spite of himself, "moderate your language; remember that there are ladies present."

Joe reddened to the roots of his hair.

"I ax their pardon, every mother's son of them," he said, tugging at his forelock; "but my feelin's carries me away."

"Tell us what it is, then," said Jefferson, "and perhaps we can offer advice."

"Well, then, sir, I've been insulted."

"I see—I see," said Jefferson; "you have been having a row with one of your messmates."

"And you have punched his head," suggested young Jack.

"Serve him right, too, Joe," said Harry Girdwood.

"No—no, young gentlemen," said Joe, "I ain't done that, or else I should be quite happy—that's just it—because I wanted his honor's permission."

"What?"

"To give him a good licking," urged Joe Basalt; "you see, I couldn't well do it without, as it's the stowaway."

The interest of the whole of the company redoubled at this.

"He's been at his tricks again," said Joe.

"I thought so."

"And d—d dirty tricks they are, too. The swab can't do nothing fair and square and above board. He allers cruises about in a nasty, sly, piratical way."

"What is it? Tell us at once."

"Yes, sir, I will. Why you see, the fact is, he has been a sounding me about trying if the crew is satisfied with your honor."

A low murmur went from mouth to mouth around the table.

"He's never trying to undermine you, old fidelity!" ejaculated Harkaway.

Joe nodded.

"That's it, you honor."

"Villain!"

"And what's more, he's been trying it on with Jack Tiller."

"He has?"

Harkaway's brow darkened, and the expression of his face grew ominous.

"How did Jack Tiller meet his advances?" asked Harvey.

"Why, Jack ain't got no command over himself, and so he—"

Joe paused.

"So what?"

"Why, Jack gave him one for himself; but he ain't damaged him much," Joe hastened to add apologetically, "for Jack Tiller knows his dooty better than that, your honor. No, he's only put one of his toplights into mourning."

This sent the two boys into ecstacies.

"And so you see, your honor, when he opened fire on to me, I could hardly believe it possible until he put it plainer, and then I was so staggered that I did not know what to do, so I thought I would come and let you know."

Harkaway looking up, caught his wife's glance fixed upon him.

"You see, it doesn't do to scoff at secret apprehensions," she said, quietly.

"No—no. This shall be seen to at once," he answered, rising from his seat. "Come with me, Dick, and you, Jefferson."

They left the cabin, followed by old Joe Basalt.

Now when they got on deck, Jack Harkaway led the way to a part where they were alone, and not likely to be disturbed.

"Now, Joe," said he, "I have been thinking this matter over. I know you have only spoken the truth, with a word of exaggeration. But we must catch the villain in his own snare."

"How, your honor?"

"I'll tell you. You must go back to this traitor, and you must play the part of a willing listener."

"A what?"

"A willing listener. You must let him think you are ready to join in his villainy, do you see?"

"I do, your honor, but damme if I like it."

"You will have to like it in this instance, Joe, for the good of us all. This man is the worst villain alive. I have forgiven him more wrongs than you would think it possible to forgive; but now the safety of all is concerned, and it must be done."

Joe scratched his head, and looked troubled.

"If that's orders, your honor, I've nothing but to obey."

"Right, Joe."

* * * * *

Having primed Joe Basalt up in his lesson, they marched off to Hunston's cabin, and Joe entered, while Harkaway, Dick Harvey, and Jefferson took up a position near where they could overhear what was going on within.

"Well, shipmate," said Basalt, "how goes it?"

Hunston was lying on his side, holding a damp towel to his damaged eye.

He only turned around, and grunted some few ungracious words.

"I've brought you some news," said Joe, repeating his lesson; "there's a regular shine on deck."

Hunston turned quickly around at this.

"What's wrong?" he asked, anxiously. "You haven't been saying anything, because I'm sure you were mistaken, as—"

"Jack Tiller was."

"Yes."

And Hunston fondled the blackened eye, mentally cursing Tiller and his hard, horny fist.

"Not I," said Joe Basalt, "not I. There's a row aloft, I told you. Three men have been put into irons, and I have got into trouble as well."

"What for?"

"Nothing," answered Joe Basalt, with a surly imitation of anger. "That's just it, for nothing, and aren't they up in the stirrups neither?"

"They are!" exclaimed Hunston.

"Rather."

"And what did they say?"

"Say!" exclaimed Basalt. "Why, they'd as lief draw a cutlass over his weasand as they'd smash a ship's biscuit."

Hunston's pale face grew crimson at these words.

"That's good," he said; "they're men of spirit."

"That they are."

"And the rest of the crew; what do they say of it?"

"Why, they are all up about it; all to a man. So if you have a good thing to offer, I'll undertake to say as they'll volunteer to a man."

"Good."

"And leave them Harkaway folks in the lurch here, as they deserve, the mean beasts."

"Mean, indeed," echoed Hunston, secretly chuckling. "Why, they're worse than mean."

"So you'd say if you only knew what a palaver they've made about having you here, pretending as it's all charity and the like, when, of course we know—"

"That's all your goodness, and that of your hot-headed comrade."

"Don't speak of Jack Tiller, my friend," said Joe, who was working into his part capitally by this time; "he sees now what a fool he has made of himself."

"Did he say so?"

"Yes."

"Why did he go on so?"

"He quite misunderstood your meaning."

"The deuce he did. Why, however could that be? I was pretty explicit."

"He thought that it was to sell him. In fact, he made sure as you had overheard us grumbling together about the skipper, and that you was a trying it on only to tell Mr. Harkaway all about it."

"Did he say so?"

"Yes."

"Then undeceive him immediately."

"I have done so."

"As for this," added Hunston, pointing to his discolored eye and cheek, "I think nothing of it. All I'll ask of him is that he shall do as much for Harkaway."

"That he will," said Joe, with sham heartiness. "And now how soon shall the ship be ours?"

Hunston glanced anxiously towards the door.

"There's no fear," said Joe, answering his look; "they are all too busy for'ard, talking about them poor devils in irons."

"Brutes!"

"Ay, that they are. But when shall we get them free from their floating prison, cos that's what it seems a-coming to?"

"I'll tell you," answered Hunston, sinking his voice, "we'll serve the Harkaway party as he served your messmates."

"How?"

"Put them in irons."

Joe Basalt gave a start at this.

"And if they would not go?"

"Chuck them overboard, all, every one of them, except the women."

"I should hardly like doing that," said Joe.

"Then it shall be *my task*," exclaimed Hunston, warming up as he unfolded his diabolical scheme. "I should like to do that part of it myself. I swore to finish them all off," he added, more to himself than to Joe, "and I shall keep my oath after all, I begin to think. I'll throw them all overboard—Harkaway, Jefferson, Harvey, all."

He looked up suddenly at the door.

Three big forms stood upon the threshold of the cabin.

The three whose names Hunston had just uttered.

Harkaway, Jefferson, and Dick Harvey.

"I thought I heard you call us," said the latter.

Hunston's color fled from his cheek.

He looked from one to the other.

Then he glanced at Joe Basalt.

Harkaway was the first to break the silence.

"Hunston."

The sound echoed dismally, as though uttered in some bare-walled cavern.

"Yes," he faltered, struggling to appear at his ease.

"Come."

"Where to?"

Harkaway pointed silently to the door.

"What do you want with me?"

"Can't you guess?"

The words were simple ones, yet they sounded like a death-knell to him.

"We have heard all; every word. This crowning act of villainy and ingratitude, baser than ever entered the brain of man, has doomed you. Follow me."

Appalled, half stunned with fear, the miserable wretch tottered after Harkaway.

Close upon his heels came Jefferson and Dick, while Joe Basalt brought up the rear.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIAL—HUNSTON'S PUNISHMENT.

"PIPE all hands on deck!"

"Ay—ay, sir."

The crew came tumbling up.

And when they were all assembled, Jefferson and Dick Harvey ranged themselves around in position, while Harkaway, with Hunston close by his side, stood forward to address them.

"My men," he said, "I have had you called together upon no pleasant errand. But it is a question of duty, and, therefore, pleasant or unpleasant, must be done. What we have to do is an act of justice, and I don't wish that any one should be able to impugn my motives. I would not leave it in the power of any man to say that I ever behaved unjustly to my worst enemy."

"Hurrah!"

A ringing cheer greeted Harkaway.

"Now, my men, what I have to say to you concerns my own and my family history, perhaps, more than it does you. You have all heard my poor boy's adventures when he fell into the hands of the Greek brigands?"

"Ay—ay, sir."

"You know who it was that was instrumental in getting him condemned to death."

"It was that sneaking lubber, Hunston," cried several voices at once.

"It was. I need not enlarge upon all he has done to merit the worst punishment it is in our power to bestow, if ever he should fall into our hands—the worst I say, eh?"

"Yes, —him!" said a voice, with a very strong expletive.

The approval of the crew was perfectly unanimous.

In vain did Hunston look about him for one of those disaffected men of whom Joe Basalt had spoken.

Not a vestige of anything like opposition to the general sentiments did he trace in any of those weather-beaten, honest countenances.

"Well," resumed Harkaway, "and what would you say if, after that I have forgiven him, taken him in hand and had him carefully tended and nursed, what would you say if even then he tried to wrong me—to ensnare innocent, well-meaning men, into a murderous plot against my life?"

"Why, I should say as he's the blackest-hearted lubber ashore or afloat," said one.

"One word more," said Harkaway. "What should we do to this wretch if we had him here in our power?"

"Give him a round dozen, to begin with," suggested Sam Mason.

"And then string him up."

A cheer came from a score of throats.

"Men," said Harkaway, "this is the villain, Hunston."

A pause.

The men were so thoroughly taken by surprise at this that they had not a word to say for themselves.

"I was anxious to spare him," said Harkaway, in conclusion, "for although he has always been false, treacherous, and cruel, I could not forget that he was a fellow-countryman and that we were boys together. I would have returned good for evil; he refused it; I now mean to try evil for evil."

The men applauded this to the echo.

Joe Basalt and his comrade Jack Tiller passed the word forward from mouth to mouth.

They told their shipmates what had taken place, and so thoroughly incensed them against him that his life would not have been worth five minutes' purchase had Harkaway, Jefferson, and Dick Harvey absented themselves.

"Come," said Jefferson, "it is growing late; let us settle it off-hand."

"What is the verdict?" said Harvey. "Let the men decide."

Their decision did not take long to arrive at.

As if with a single voice, the men responded:

"Death!"

A sickening sensation stole over Hunston.

There was enough in that to appal the stoutest heart, it is true, and he now felt that it was all over.

"Very good," said Harkaway. "His fate is with you."

"String him up to the yardarm at once," suggested Sam Mason.

"Tie him up by the heels and let's shoot at him."

"Let him walk the plank."

"No; hanging is better fun. It's a dog's death that he has earned, so let him have his deserts."

A rope was got and the end of it was flung over the yardarm, and a running noose made in it.

Then rough hands were laid upon the doomed man.

This aroused him into lifting his voice in his own behalf.

"Harkaway," he said, "do you know that this is murder—cold-blooded murder?"

"So is every execution, even if sanctioned by law."

"But it is done upon ample proof."

"We have proof enough."

"You haven't a single witness against me," said Hunston, eagerly.

"Plenty."

"Where's one! Let go, I tell you," he cried frantically, at the men who were dragging him towards the rope. "This is murder; you'll hang for it, Harkaway; you'll—cowards! all of you upon one."

But they did not pay much heed to his ravings.

"Do you hear, Harkaway?" he cried. "This is murder, whatever you call it. It will hang you yet; at the least, it will transport you for life."

Harkaway smiled.

"I shall not soil my fingers in the matter."

"It is your work!" now yelled Hunston, struggling with mad desperation.

"Then we'll all have a hand in it," said Harkaway; "we'll all pull together, so that no one can fix it upon his fellow—"

"You'll not escape," yelled the miserable wretch. "You'll swing for it yourself; you will, I swear. You have no witnesses; these two sailors are notorious liars!"

"Take that, you swab," cried Joe Basalt, dashing his fist in his face.

"They are greater curs than yourself," yelled Hunston; "such witnesses would swear away your own life for a glass of grog—witnesses, indeed—"

He stopped short.

His glance fell upon two forms standing close by—young Jack and Harry Girdwood.

Both were dressed as he had last seen them in the mountain haunt of the brigands.

Hunston was still in ignorance of the rescue of the boys.

For all he knew their bodies were rotting in their mountain grave in Greece.

They bent upon him the same sad and stern look which had been so efficacious before, and he covered before them.

Appalled at the horrible phantoms come to mock him at his last moments, he clapped his hand to his eyes in the vain endeavor to shut out the sight.

Vain, indeed, for the sight possessed a horrible fascination for him, which no man can describe.

"Down, and beg for mercy," said young Jack, solemnly.

"On your knees, wretch!" added Harry Girdwood.

"Hah!"

The two boys pointed together to the feet of Harkaway senior.

The condemned man caught at their meaning at once.

A wild cry of hope came from his lips, and he burst from the sailors who held him and threw himself at Harkaway's feet.

"Mercy—mercy, Harkaway!" he cried, piteously. "Have mercy, for the love of Heaven, as you hope for mercy yourself hereafter."

Harkaway gazed on him in silence.

"Look there," cried Hunston, wildly pointing to where the two boys stood still in contemplation of the scene. "Look there; see, they are begging for mercy for me."

"Who? Where?" demanded Harkaway, in considerable astonishment.

"Your son, your own boy; don't you see him?" pursued Hunston, wildly. "Look. No. It is my own fancy, my fear-stricken mind, which conjures up those horrible visions. Ugh!"

And he cowered down at Harkaway's feet with averted glance, endeavoring to shut out the fearsome sight.

"Take him away," said Harkaway to the men.

They advanced and laid hands upon him, but Hunston fought madly with them and clung to Harkaway's knees in desperation.

It was his last chance, he felt positive.

"Think, Harkaway, think," he cried again and again. "Remember our boyhood's days; remember our youth, passed at school together. We were college chums, and—"

"No; not quite," interrupted Dick Harvey in disgust. "We were at Oxford together, but never chums."

"You were never the sort of man that one would care to chum with," added Harkaway.

"Never!"

"Take him away."

Hunston gave a loud yell of despair and gazed around him.

Again his glance was riveted by the sight of the two boys standing in the same attitude, and then, horror-stricken, appalled, he sank upon the ground all of a heap and half fainting.

A miserable, a piteous object, indeed.

* * * * *

"Hunston," said Harkaway, after a few minute's pause, "you bade me think. It is my turn to bid you think. If your white-livered fears had not blinded your judgment, you would have known that your life is safe here."

Hunston raised his head slowly.

He gazed about him with the same vacant look, utterly unable to realize the meaning of Harkaway's words.

"You jest," he faltered.

"We are not butchers," said Jefferson, sternly.

Humbled, degraded though he was, these words of hope sent the blood coursing through his veins wildly.

Saved!

Was it possible?

Young Jack stepped out of the circle and approached the miserable wretch.

"When we last stood face to face, and when you ordered the Greek brigands to fire on us, Hunston, I told you that this would come about."

Hunston shrank affrightedly before the lad.

"I told you, Hunston," continued young Jack, "that the time would come when you would grovel in the dirt and beg your life from my father. That time has come, you see. Like the miserable cur that you are, you grovel, you beg and pray in a way that I would never condescend to do to you. You have tasted all the horrors of anticipation, and that is worse than death itself. Now, perhaps, you know what I and my comrade Harry felt when you condemned us to death."

"We told you," added Harry Girdwood, quietly, "that it would come home to you; it has."

During the foregoing, Hunston began to realize the truth.

They lived.

"Get up," said Jefferson; "it is time to end this sickening scene."

Hunston slowly arose to his feet.

"Excuse me," said the captain, stepping forward, "but as captain of this ship—under your orders, Mr. Harkaway, of course—I can't see how it is possible to allow his offense to go unpunished. You are of course at liberty to forgive him for any wrong he may have done you all, but with all due deference I must set my face against winking at such offenses as he has committed on board this ship."

"Listen to the skipper," added another of the crew.

"To let him off scot free would be to encourage insubordination and mutiny, in fact."

"Then I leave it to you, captain," said Harkaway; "I shall not interfere in your management of the ship."

Hunston's heart sank.

"Get rid of him at once," suggested Harvey.

"How?"

"Lower him in a boat; provision it for a month and set him adrift."

"Good."

"Do that," said Hunston, "and you consign me to a living death worse than any tortures that savages could inflict."

He remembered too well how he and Toro the Italian had been cast adrift from the "Flowery Land."

He had not forgotten the horrors of that cruise.

It was, in truth as he said, ten times more horrible than death at their hands could be.

"My own opinion is," said the captain, "that his crime should be punished at once; such a crime should not be allowed to pass on board ship."

"What would you do?"

"Tie him up to a grating and give him four dozen lashes."

A wild storm of cheering greeted this proposal.

There was some feeble attempt at opposition upon the part of the Harkaway party, but this was overruled by the captain and crew.

"I'm not a cruel man, gentlemen," said the captain, "but I must side with the crew in this. Now, we'll give him every chance. I propose to let him off if there is a single voice raised in his favor.

Not a word was spoken.

"If any of you think, my men, that he should not be punished, he shall escape. Let any man stand forth and it shall settle it. I will allow him to escape and not question the motives of whosoever speaks for him."

Hunston looked anxiously around him.

Not a voice.

Not so much as a glance of pity did he encounter there.

His only hope was in the man that he had most wronged of all there present, and so in despair he turned to Harkaway.

But the latter moved away from the spot in silence.

Despair.

Rough, horny hands were laid upon him, and his coat and shirt were torn in shreds from his back until he stood stripped to the waist.

The grating was rigged for punishment, and the culprit was lashed securely to it.

"Barclay."

"Yes, sir."

"Stand forward."

"Here, sir."

"Take the cat."

"Yes, sir."

This was the youngest boy in the ship.

The lad took the whip and poised it in his hand eager to begin operations.

"Joe Basalt."

"Yes, your honor."

"Time the strokes."

"Ay—ay, sir."

The boy Barclay now received his instructions, and noted the same diligently.

"Strike well up, not too low. You understand well across the shoulders."

"Yes, cap'n."

"And don't be too eager or too quick. Let each stroke tell its own tale."

What were the miserable man's feelings when he heard his torture prepared thus, with such coolness and deliberation, we leave you to imagine.

A momentary pause then occurred, during which everyone present looked on with mixed sensations of eagerness and dread.

"One!"

A whizzing noise.

Then a dull, heavy thud as the thongs came in contact with the culprit's back and shoulders.

A gasp came from the spectators, a convulsive shudder from the suffering wretch himself.

And then his shoulders showed a series of livid ridges of bruised flesh.

"Two."

Down came the lash.

The blood shot forth from the right shoulder, where there was more flesh to encounter the cruel whip.

"Three."

A moan of utter agony burst from the victim, whose blood streamed down his back.

A sickening, horrible sight to contemplate.

"Four."

"Hah!"

"Come away," exclaimed Harkaway, "come away from this. It makes me sick and faint."

"Yes," said Jefferson, "it is not to my taste."

"Nor mine."

"Nor mine," said Dick.

"This may be justice, my friend," said Jack Harkaway, "but it isn't English—it is not humanity."

"Five."

A cry came from the prisoner.

"Cast him loose," cried Harkaway, "no more—no more."

But the sailors did not appear to hear.

"Six."

"Have done, I say!" thundered Jefferson. "Enough of this."

"Excuse me, sir," said the captain, "we have a duty to perform; I can understand that it is not pleasant to you, but—"

"Seven," sang out Joe Basalt, drowning every voice.

Down came the whip again.

And as the thongs struck the lacerated flesh of the wounded man, he gave a piercing shriek.

It sounded more like the cry of some wild animal than the utterance of a human being.

"Eight."

"Fetch the doctor," exclaimed Harkaway.

Young Jack, who was secretly glad of an excuse to begone, ran off and brought the doctor up from below.

"Doctor Anderson," said Harkaway, hurriedly, "I believe sincerely that this man has earned all he has had and a great deal more."

"Indeed he has," said Dr. Anderson,

"But I can't endure the lash. It is savage; it is unworthy of a civilized people—it must not go on. Stop it."

"How many has he had?"

The answer to this came at that identical moment from Joe Basalt's lips.

"Twelve."

As the lash came down, the body shook slightly and then was quite still.

"Say that he can bear no more," said Hark-

away. "They'll heed your report as the doctor."

"I shall only say the truth," said the doctor.

"You think so?"

"Of course. He has fainted. You'll kill him if you go on. Cast him loose, carry him to his berth."

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. MOLE'S TROUBLES AGAIN—AN ADVENTURE WITH NERO—LAND HO—THE FIRST VIEW OF AUSTRALIA.

LET US DRAW THE CURTAIN.

The particulars given in the preceding chapter must be as unpleasant to the reader as they were to Harkaway, to Jefferson, to Dick Harvey, and beyond all to Harry Girdwood and young Jack.

They are not agreeable matters to relate, and we gladly draw the veil upon such a scene.

Once in the care of Doctor Anderson, the prisoner was tended carefully, and the doctor's best skill was employed in bringing him back to health.

But his convalescence was a long time in being brought about, for not only was he cruelly maimed, but, to use the doctor's own expression—

"The scourge had knocked him to bits in health generally."

* * * * *

"What a capital sailor old Nero makes, Harry."

"Splendid."

"He only wants to know how to chew."

"And take grog like Mole."

"True: and then he'd be an out-and-out sailor."

These words were part of a conversation which our two young comrades were indulging in one afternoon towards sundown as they walked to and fro on deck.

They had rigged Nero out in full nautical costume, and taught him several sailors' tricks of manner.

He hitched up his inexpressibles with a jerk that the late T. P. Cooke might have made studies from.

And his bow and scrape, although more like a stage sailor than the real thing itself, were ticked off so admirably, that you expected him to start off into a rattling hornpipe.

But perhaps the greatest treat of all was to see him pretending to take observations through a telescope.

"Nero," cried young Jack.

The monkey ran up at the word.

"Give us your arm, Nero."

And so drawing a paw under each of their arms, they promenaded the deck, these three young monkeys together, to the great amusement and delight of the sailors generally.

"Why, Joe!" said Sam Mason, "he looks as great a swell as the port admiral."

"Port admiral! As the first lord himself."

"Do you know, Joe, that Billy Longbow had a monkey once as would—"

"Now for a yarn."

"No, this is a born fact," persisted Sam Mason, stoutly. "Billy Longbow had a monkey on board ship as used to mock the bo's'n, and one day when he see the bo's'n take out his rattan to larrup one of the powder monkeys, Jocko went for to give the bo's'n one for hisself."

"By way of protecting one of his own species, I s'pose," suggested Joe.

"Perhaps. Well, he felt in all his pockets for a rattan, and he happened to got hold of the tip of his tail. Now he seed the bo's'n lugging hard to get the rattan out of his pocket, for it had got entangled with the lanyard of his Jack knife, and so Jocko tugs precious hard at his tail, presuming it to be a rattan likewise, I s'pose, and by Jove, if he doesn't pull it right out."

"Come, now," cried Joe Basalt, with a grunt, "I ain't a-going to swaller that tale."

"It's a fact. Billy Longbow was the most truthful pal I ever had—out came his nether rattan."

"Well, what next?"

"Nothing next," answered Sam Mason, with a sly look. "That was the end of Jocko's tail, and it's the end of mine too."

Now while they were engaged in listening to Sam Mason's Billy Longbow anecdote, they saw Mr. Mole come out of the deck saloon, where he had been dozing.

He walked up the deck with a certain apparent unsteadiness of gait.

"Old Mole is half seas over," said Harry Girdwood.

"I'll tell you what. Wouldn't it be a lark if

we could get him to strut up and down with Nero, without knowing it?"

"That's more easily said than done, I imagine."

"Wait and see."

They crept back out of sight as Mr. Mole passed along.

Then, having made a hurried whispered consultation, young Jack stepped forth alone and tackled Mr. Mole.

"Taking the air, sir?"

"Yes, Jack—hiccup—yes, my dear boy, and I have come to look out for land."

"Land?"

"Yes."

"Are we near?"

"Sho—sho—I mean so—I s'pose—s'pose—"

Mr. Mole was conscious of his speech being a little bit thick, and he hastened to add that he was suffering from toothache.

"My mouth ish sho shwollen—swollen, I mean—that I can hardly sp—speak plainly," he said.

"Dear me! how shocking!" exclaimed young Jack.

Slipping his arm under Mr. Mole's they walked up and down talking.

Meanwhile young Jack tipped the wink to Harry Girdwood, who slipped out of his hiding-place with Nero, and followed Mole and Jack along the deck.

Young Jack chose his opportunity well, and drawing his arm out of Mr. Mole's, he pushed Nero's in its place.

Mr. Mole, all unconscious of the change in his companion, strutted along, chattering away, secretly pleased at having such an excellent listener by his side.

"It'sh really pleasure to talk to you, my dear boy," he said. "You un—stand with half a word—and I enjoy—a conservation—conserva—singular thing—I can't say conservashun—I enjoy—a talk—an intellectshul chat more with you than sitting down to wine with Jeffshon and Harvey, and your dear father. Good fellarsh—jolly good fellarsh—only too fond of sitting over wine. Shocking habit—shpended hours in getting tipsy—hiccup!"

* * * * *

Now, while Mr. Mole poured out his philosophical reflections into Nero's ear, Harry Girdwood went and fetched Harvey, old Jack, and Jefferson.

Young Jack stepped back to the door of the deck saloon, and sat down while Mole turned round and hobbled up the deck again, with Nero still leaning on his arm.

As the old gentleman came up to where they all stood, they could hear him still laying down the law to Nero.

"Yesh, Jack, my dear boy," he was saying, "wine'sh a jolly good thing—to be ushed and not abushed. Blow my thootache—thootache—so very dericulous—don't know what I'm shaying."

Mr. Mole winked and blinked like an owl in daylight.

"Jack."

"Sir."

"Whash the devil—Jack!"

He stared in utter amazement.

"Yes, sir."

"Why, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, suddenly popping out of the cabin, followed by Jefferson and old Jack, "what on earth are you walking up and down with him for?"

"Who?"

Before another word could be spoken, Nero, on a secret sign from his young master, took off his tarpaulin hat, and dabbed it on to Mr. Mole's head.

Mole turned suddenly around upon his companion.

"Nero—the devil fly away with you, you beast!"

He made a dash at the monkey; but the latter was up in the shrouds and out of danger in the twinkling of an eye.

* * * * *

"Land ho!"

"Which way?"

"Due south."

Harkaway had a glass up in a crack.

"That's right," he said. "Gentlemen all, allow me to introduce you to Australia."

CHAPTER XV.

HUNSTON IS DISPOSED OF—SYDNEY COVE—A HERO OF THE BUSH—ONE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD, ALIVE OR DEAD—A NEW CHARACTER—CAPTAIN MORGAN'S RESOLVE—A DARING EXPLOIT.

Yes, there was Australia, sure enough.

The ladies came running up on deck at the news, for the first sight of land after a long voyage is a thing to make your heart beat, however much you may like the sea.

"I can't see anything yet," said little Emily, after peering vainly through a telescope for five minutes.

"Because you don't get the proper focus," explained young Jack.

"Then you fix it for me, since you are so clever," retorted the young lady, saucily.

"That's an Irish remedy," laughed young Jack.

However, he helped her to fix upon the focus and then she had the gratification of seeing the land, and before very long they were enabled to perceive not merely the outline of the coast, but to distinguish the features of the scenery.

It was a beautiful verdure-clad range of hills that they had first perceived from the distance, which were half a mile or more inland.

So that they found themselves presently much nearer land than they had supposed.

It was covered with wild, luxuriant vegetation, but it was altogether uncultivated.

As far as the eye could reach there were no signs of human habitations or human work.

"Harkaway," said Jefferson, as they stood together contemplating the scene, "this is where Hunston must be dropped ashore."

Harkaway thought it over awhile.

"Yes, Jefferson," he said, presently, "I think you are right, this will do. He can't well starve here, and it will be better than dropping him amongst civilized people."

A boat was manned, and provisioned, and lowered.

Then Hunston was brought up from below.

His face had never changed since the first moment that he had recovered from the great shock of the flogging.

A settled expression of stern dullness had fallen upon him then, and from this he had never altered.

Apparently there was some fixed purpose in his mind now that it would take much to uproot.

He never said a word when they came to fetch him.

He was not a little anxious to know all about it, but such was his pride that he would have perished sooner than breathe a word.

As he was lowered into the boat, Harkaway just gave him to understand what he was going to do in a few hurriedly chosen words.

"We are going to put you ashore here, Hunston; not that you have any right to expect the least consideration at our hands, but we do not wish to have it on our consciences that you have been badly treated by us. You will be left here, far away from any human habitation, where you can do no harm, at least for some time to come. We shall leave you these provisions, but we have no arms or ammunition to give you."

Hunston listened silently—impassively.

Not the faintest change in the expression of his countenance indicated that he heard the words which had been addressed to him.

"You are going, and our ways through the rest of our lives may be widely separated. We may never meet again. It will be some gratification to you to know that you have once more most keenly disappointed me—that I would have given much to see the least signs of repentance in you—that the greatest delight would have been for me to say to myself: 'At least I have conquered the evil in that man's nature by showing him a good return for his vicious acts, and turned a bitter enemy into a friend,' but that was a forlorn hope. May you live to repent of your evil courses."

Hunston turned.

Not a word escaped him.

The boat pulled off from the vessel, and in the same sullen silence he was landed with his rations.

There were forty pounds of hard biscuits, a good twenty pounds of salt beef, besides rice, flour, a jar of water and other matters which might be necessary, should he fail to fall in with the means of getting food and drink for a considerable time.

But when that was gone, he might starve.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN AUSTRALIA.

WHEN all was landed, the sailors who had rowed Hunston ashore got back into their boat.

"Good by, Hunston," said Sam Mason; "you're a gallus black-hearted swab, but I hope you'll mend your ways and do well. Remember your old friends on board—"

Hunston turned sharply round at this.

"Yes," he said, in slow, deliberate accents, "I shall not forget. Tell Harkaway that from me. I hope that we may meet again, and when we do, I shall be sure to remember all your kindness—all."

"Do you hear that, man?" exclaimed Sam Mason. "There's a brave chap for you. He waits till the governor is a blessed long way out of hearing before he ventures to threaten. He reminds me of the chap as went on to Highgate Hill to tell the lord mayor that he'd pull his nose."

Hunston stood upon the beach, watching the receding boat, and when it was too far for them to be able to distinguish his movements, he sank upon the ground and buried his face in his hands—a pray to the bitterest thoughts.

The shock of solitude was dreadful to him.

Before he met a human being again, he was destined to go through many desperate adventures.

But now we have to follow the cruise of the *Westward Ho!*

* * * * *

Before there was a new moon the *Westward Ho!* anchored in Sydney Cove.

On the day that our hero and his friends took up their quarters in the chief hotel of Sydney, there was considerable excitement afoot respecting a person who is destined to figure in these pages.

This was a very extraordinary character—a rover, a bushranger and bandit, known as Captain Morgan.

Now the charges against this desperado were many, and all of a serious description.

A price was set upon his head, but yet, in spite of all, he contrived to play at hide-and-seek with justice.

Glaring placards were stuck about the hotel, even in the dining-hall and in the principal drawing-rooms; in fact, everywhere that it was likely to attract the attention of residents and travellers.

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD

"Will be paid for the body—alive or dead—of the notorious bushranger, bandit, and cattle-stealer, commonly known as Captain Morgan. He stands five feet eight inches and a half in his stockings; is very broad chested and thickly set. He has light brown hair and beard, full blue eyes, and his expression is usually one of fierce determination. He is possessed of great physical strength, activity and daring. The chief scenes of his depredations are the small stations up country, in the neighborhood of the Macquarie. Morgan is a dead shot. The band he commands is composed of escaped convicts, malefactors and many of the natives. The above reward of one hundred pounds will be paid to any one bringing—or causing to be brought—the said Captain Morgan to Government House, Paramatta.

BY ORDER.

"I hope we are not going to fall foul of this precious robber hero," said Harkaway.

"Let us hope not," said Jefferson. "Although it would not surprise me, for it seems to be about our luck."

"Well, what with Monastos and that other ruffian in the mountains, we have had to tackle some desperate characters in that way."

"It has become a regular trade with you, Jack," laughed Harvey.

"I wonder if this Captain Morgan is only half as great a hero as they pretend?" said Harkaway.

"I'll wager that it is some muscular ruffian," said Jefferson.

"And a low, wicked, ugly vagabond," added Harvey.

"Yes."

"But why ugly?" exclaimed Harkaway. "Morgan, I have heard, is a handsome fellow."

"Well," said Jefferson, thoughtfully, "without knowing anything of Captain Morgan, I should say that there is a dash about him, and that he is not wanting in courage."

"You're right there, sir," said a strange voice, close behind them.

They all turned around.

The speaker was a thick-set, well-proportioned man of a little over the middle height, and dressed in a fashion which set off his muscular proportions to great advantage.

He had on high jack-boots which came partly up to the thigh, blue serge breeches which fitted him tightly and showed the muscles of his thighs above the boots and below the tunic, standing out in big bosses that told their own tale.

He wore a loose sack of red flannel formed into a tunic by a thick, rough hide belt around his waist, from which dangled a long cavalry sword.

His hair was auburn and his beard sandy, with

rather a reddish dash in it, while his face, which had once been fair, was deeply bronzed now with exposure to the burning Australian sun.

He had a full blue eye, and seemed born, like Mars, to threaten and command.

"You're right there, sir," repeated the stranger, "Captain Morgan is not wanting in courage."

They turned to survey the speaker, and he bore their scrutiny with the greatest possible coolness.

"You know Captain Morgan, then?" said Jefferson.

"Yes," answered the stranger, smacking his boots carelessly with the handle of his whip. "I have often been close to him."

"Well," said Dick Harvey, pointing to the placard, "I shouldn't care to boast myself of that man's acquaintance."

"I don't boast of it," returned the stranger. "Boasting on any subject is not a weakness of mine. I have been at very close quarters with Captain Morgan, and I didn't like it, not at all. I can take my own part as a rule."

"So I should say," answered old Jack, surveying him from top to toe with a critical eye.

"Yes, and yet I did not get anything more satisfactory from the meeting than this."

He pointed to the mark of a freshly-healed sword-cut upon his right cheek.

"I begin to see," said Dick Harvey. "You must be a member of the mounted police?"

The stranger nodded.

"One of the Sydney Mounted Police stationed up the river. Far?"

"The last station."

"You would know Captain Morgan if you met him?"

"Among a million," answered the stranger.

"I suppose he never ventures near to Sydney?" said Jack.

"Indeed he does. That's the reason I am here now?"

"Here?"

"Yes; I had to assure myself that it was neither of you gentlemen."

"Neither of us!"

"Yes; Captain Morgan is reported to have said that he meant to have a look at the celebrated Jack Harkaway, and as that celebrity is here somewhere, Captain Morgan is like enough to be here. He disguises himself with very remarkable dexterity, and his audacity helps him through everything he tries. Here he is or will be."

"What, here in Sydney!" ejaculated Jefferson.

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"You don't know this Captain Morgan. He rather likes thrusting himself in the lion's den. He has said that he would look up and see Mr. Harkaway, and he'll do it, as sure as I am here."

"I shall believe it," said Harvey, "when we see him here; not before."

The police officer turned, and gave Dick an odd look.

"You are a sceptical man, and I don't think that you would believe it even then."

"Even when?"

"Not even if you saw Captain Morgan himself before you. Excuse me contradicting you," retorted the officer, "but remember my words."

So saying, he turned to Jack Harkaway.

"You are Mr. Harkaway, I presume?" he said. Jack bowed.

"That is my name."

The officer gave old Jack a sharp glance, taking in his appearance from top to toe, and reading his expression with the look of a man who was a keen judge of men.

"I suppose there has been a deal of exaggeration in what I have heard of you," said the police officer; "I look upon it all as a Baron Munchausen tale. It is some gratification to find that there really is such a man as Jack Harkaway. If I can be of any service to you while you are in Sydney, I shall be very glad."

"You are very kind."

A confused murmur of voices was heard at this juncture, which apparently caught the officer's ear.

He bowed to the company generally, and moved to the door.

"If you come across Captain Morgan to-day—" said Dick.

The officer turned, holding the door handle.

"Yes; what then?"

"Tell him that we have a renowned old bird-catcher here, who will certainly put salt on his tail when the Sydney police have failed."

"Indeed," said the officer, smiling, "and what is the name of your renowned old bird-catcher, sir?"

"The grand old fellow's name is Mole."

"Mole," said the officer; "I shall remember Mole."

"He is not a person anyone would forget who had once seen him," said Harvey; "he is a regular man-killer."

The officer bowed, and passed out.

Now the commotion below had grown still greater, and barely had the door closed upon the stranger, when another door at the further end of the room opened, and three men burst in.

"Halloo!" ejaculated Jefferson, "this is rather unceremonious."

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said the foremost of the three; "there is no time for ceremony. Have you seen him?"

"Who?" exclaimed Harkaway, in wonder.

"Captain Morgan?"

"The devil take Captain Morgan, and fly away with him," returned Harvey, petulantly. "We haven't seen him, nor we don't want to."

"But he was here."

"Who—Morgan?"

"Yes, Morgan—the bushranger and murderer."

"You are mistaken," replied Jack Harkaway. "The only person that has been in this room besides ourselves for the last hour, was one of the mounted police."

"A broad-shouldered fellow with a sandy beard?" exclaimed the new comer.

"Yes."

"Which way did he go?" demanded the former, excitedly.

"Out at that door."

"Quick," ejaculated the other, fiercely turning to his companions. "Sharp's the word, men, or he'll escape us yet."

The Harkaway party looked at each other half stupefied.

"Is it possible that that was Captain Morgan?" demanded Jefferson.

"Yes."

"Then we have been sold with a vengeance."

"Sold!" quoth the officer, with something like contempt in his tone, "of course you have. Sold."

He turned to his companions and exclaimed:

"Off with you—fly! cut off his retreat. Don't fire upon him unless you find it impossible to stop him otherwise. It will be a feather in our caps to take him alive."

The two men flew back by the door through which they came, and the head or leader rushed to the window.

He dashed it open and leaned out eagerly.

"Ha, there he is! We shall be in time. Morgan, yield yourself a prisoner!" he shouted; "yield, or I fire."

"Take that!" returned a clear, ringing voice.

"Bang!"

"That was a bullet from a long horse pistol."

The man at the window ducked just in time, and the bullet smashed a big looking-glass in the room.

"Curse your impudence!" cried the man at the window, furiously. "Here's at you!" He drew a pistol and fired.

There was heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs below and the sounds of a horse at full gallop.

Then a loud, ringing laugh.

"He's off!" cried the man, in bitter vexation.

"They'll never get near him. They might as well try to hunt down a flash of lightning as Captain Morgan."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HULKS—TRAVELERS MEET WITH VERY STRANGE BEDFELLOWS—HOW TORO AND BIG-AMINI MET AT THE ANTIPODES—THE RESULTS OF THE ENCOUNTER—SCENES OF CONVICT LIFE AT BOTANY BAY.

UPON a certain day in the fall of the year—H. M. S. *Thunderbolt* arrived at one of the chief ports in New South Wales.

The cargo of the *Thunderbolt* was an ugly one—convicts.

Amongst the batch of convicts in question were two men, who, although known by unrecognizable aliases now, had at one time been known by names which are familiar to all who have followed the varied fortunes of Jack Harkaway.

One of these was an Italian of gigantic form, who had been captured by Nabley, the English detective.

The Italian convict Toro, the giant brigand.

The other convict was an Englishman.

He was a Cockney, who had shown great cunning at his trial, and cross-examined the witnesses for the prosecution with the skill of an Old Bailey barrister.

But do what he could, he failed to get off, and

there was Mr. Samuel Perks, alias Bigamini, for a matter of seven years.

Now, strange to relate, the other convict, to whom allusion has been made, and Toro, never once met, for the convicts were divided off into gangs, and seldom or never came into contact.

The difference between the two villains was very remarkable.

Toro was bold and defiant throughout.

Bigamini, on the contrary, did his best to propitiate the chaplain.

"Safe card that," he would say to himself. "Get the right side of the old smiter, and you're safe for a ticket; that's my game, and it's worth a good deal of soft sawder to land it."

He was right in his tactics, as the result showed, for before the voyage was completed, the reverend gentlemen whose mission it was to endeavor to bring back those erring men into the right path was quite taken by his show of contrition.

"As you are so truly repentant," he would say, continually, "it will be an easy matter for you to obtain a mitigation of your harsh sentence, and I will exert myself to that end."

"How very good of you, sir," the artful Bigamini would say, in his own peculiarly slimy manner; "too good—too good, sir, for such a wicked sinner as I am."

"Nothing can be too good for a sinner who truly repents," the chaplain would reply at this.

And so, as time went on, Bigamini had an excellent chance of getting off, as many a scoundrel has got off before, by means of a sneaking, hypocritical air, and professions of repentance.

Matters, however, were very different with Toro.

The doctor had discovered that the Italian's robust health was giving way under such close confinement, and ordered him to take exercise.

The first day, in spite of all his experience, his temper gave way under the infliction of having a man fixed to him by the arm, and he turned with savage brutality upon the keeper.

"I should like to have your blood!" he said, with a suddenness and vehemence that quite startled the man.

The keeper looked around at his companion, and saw by the vicious expression of his countenance, how sincere he was.

"What have I done now?" he said, in a half-joking yet earnest manner.

"You are hateful to me," retorted the convict fiercely, "and I should like to have my arms free to show you how I hate you."

"Thank you," returned the keeper, coolly; "I suppose you would like your arms free, providing mine were fastened."

Toro's right wrist was fastened by the handcuff to the jailor's left, and he turned upon him, giving it such a fierce wrench, that it hurt them both.

"Drop that," exclaimed the jailer, nettled at having his wrist hurt, "or I'll put you on your back."

This brought matters to a crisis at once.

With a fierce imprecation, the Italian now grabbed at the keeper, but the latter caught him by the hand and held him powerless.

"You're an impetuous, imprudent fool," he said coolly, staring the convict in the eyes.

Toro struggled and wrestled to get free, but the keeper was used to rough work of this kind, and he was too much for the Italian giant.

"If you don't keep quiet, you'll get put into irons."

Toro tore frantically at the keeper, and finally maddened with rage and humiliation, struck him.

The keeper then lost his temper, and dashed his fist into the convict's face, with a force that made him see sparks.

At this point there was a general rush to them.

Keepers and convicts (the latter anxious to curry favor with the folks in authority) fell upon the rebellious prisoner and bore him down.

"Unlock the handcuff first," said the big keeper.

This done, one of the convicts dropped on the still struggling rebel with his knee upon his chest, and so pinioned him down.

"Keep quiet, will you?" said this zealous convict, holding the Italian; "remember," he added, sinking his voice to a whisper, "remember how Barboni came to grief through temper."

Toro ceased struggling immediately.

"Who?" he faltered.

"Barboni."

"How do you know Barboni?" demanded Toro.

"The same way that I know you, Toro. I keep my eyes open, and I never forget a face when once my blessed peepers have lighted upon it. Oh, dear, no."

"Who are you—what is your name?" demanded the mystified Italian.

"Hush, we are observed. Here, you fellows," he added, aloud, seeing that their hurried conversation was attracting attention, "keep quiet."

The men were coming from the guard room with a stretcher for Toro's special service.

And now they were close upon them.

"One word more," exclaimed Toro; "tell me your name."

"When you were known as Toro," answered the artful convict, "I was Bigamini. Here I am Mr. Samuel Perks, esquire, alias Smiffins, alias Number 4,093, a repentant lag awaiting his ticket."

"What," exclaimed Toro, "Bigamini?"

"Yes; hush!"

"Is it possible?"

"Of course, and what's more, when you've got over this job—though it'll take you weeks and lots of good behavior—then I'll show you a thing or two, and instruct you how to make life happy even at stone breaking on a skilley diet. Not a word more now, but keep your eyes and ears wide open."

The stretcher came up, borne by four stout men.

"Now, you wicked, bad fellar," said Number 4,093, with a snuffle, "mend your ways, and be advised by one who has seen his sin. Oh, yea!"

However, Toro was not to be converted so easily.

A bitter imprecation escaped him as they bore him away strapped to the stretcher, powerless to help himself hand or foot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF TWO CONVICTS—THE ARTFUL DODGE—EPISODES IN THE CAREER OF TWO VERY BAD LOTS—HOW THEY WORKED THE ORACLE.

THE words of the convict No. 4,093 sank deeply in Toro's mind.

Those words, coupled with the rough discipline which his outbreak had brought down upon him, had a most salutary effect.

So, bending his head before the exigencies of his position, the Italian convict became a hypocrite, and uncongenial though the part was, he soon became an adept.

The consequence was that at the expiration of a few weeks he was, by the doctor's request, permitted once more to take open air exercise.

He longed to see his fellow convict No. 4,093.

He longed to make inquiries, but dare not for fear of exciting suspicions, and when night came, back he went to his cell, lowered in spirit, and heartsick with hope deferred.

He passed a feverish night, and when the morning came, he was resolved to question some of the people about Bigamini, but he labored under a certain drawback, and this was that he was ignorant of the name under which Bigamini was convicted.

But to his intense joy, his eye lighted on a figure which recalled Bigamini, and on his back was the number 4,093.

He watched and chose an opportune moment to speak to him when no one was by.

"Bigamini, caro," he said, earnestly, "you haven't forgotten me?—Toro!" he added, as the other passed on without heeding him.

Toro saw him go by in despair, and then he ran after him in desperation.

"Hush!" said Bigamini, looking in another direction as he spoke; "we are watched."

The answer shot a gleam of hope into Toro's breast.

Bigamini was not cutting him either through forgetfulness or for other reasons.

He was only waiting for a favorable moment.

Toro followed him up, keeping at a little distance until they had got beyond a small clump of trees.

"Now, tell me, Bigamini," he said, in imploring tones, "when shall I see you? When shall I know if there is to be an end to this life, worse, far worse than a living death?"

"Keep behind me still," said Bigamini, in a subdued voice, "and I will try and answer you."

"I will—I will!" exclaimed the Italian, eagerly.

"You must keep down your temper; play hypocrite night and day, and then I will show you how we can work it."

"Tell me what I have to do—say what I can do; anything you say I will gladly do."

"Show patience, bow your head meekly."

"What for?"

"Because it has already got me better grub than you get. The chaplain (good man!) he likes to think that his pious counsels have been successful, and he recommends me to the notice of the governor, who is always much influenced by the words of the clergyman, and that gets me off stone-breaking and oakum-picking, and other hard jobs, and presently—"

"Yes," said Toro, eagerly, "and presently?"

"It may get me a little liberty."

"Hah!"

"And then if an opportunity offered, who can say what might happen?"

"Who indeed?" exclaimed Toro, chuckling in a subdued manner, lest he should be overheard.

"I might glide—if I saw the way clear—and you might glide, too; we should be company. I long to do those little matters in company. It has been my ruin to be too fond of company," added No. 4,093, woefully, "for I took a wife or two too many because of this weakness."

"You got transported for bigamy?" said Toro. The other groaned.

Alas—alas!

"A dreadful wicked thing, Mr. Toro," said he, with a sigh and a hypocritical smirk which he had contracted since he had been—as he expressed it—"dodging the parson;" "the voyage in their transports is by no means transports of delight."

* * * * *

The good chaplain consulted with Bigamini about the repentant sinner in whom he, Bigamini, appeared to take such an interest.

"Does he seem to be penetrated with the gravity of his position?" the reverend gentleman would constantly inquire of Bigamini.

To this the latter was careful to reply, for he knew that the least extravagance on his part would do more harm than good to the cause in view.

"He is becoming gradually more and more open to reason, sir," Bigamini would reply, hanging his head, "but I can't say in fairness that he is a convert."

"Patience—patience," the worthy gentleman would reply; "we must not hope to do it all at once. A good work is not to be accomplished without trouble, patience, and perseverance, my good man."

"No, sir, no," quoth No. 4,093, meekly; "I wish I could follow the good example which you set me."

"Ah, my friend," said the clergyman; "I am only an erring man like yourself—a weak worm. I sin hourly. I strive to keep in the right but narrow path, and frequently I strive in vain."

In the end, the convict No. 4,093 gave it as his opinion to the chaplain that the Italian was growing convinced of the error of his ways, and it would be reasonable if he were but permitted to take exercise with the rest of the convicts.

"I am afraid that the governor will rather oppose that," said the chaplain, "after his violent conduct with the warden that day."

"No wonder, sir," returned Bigamini.

"He is a very dangerous character, I fear—"

"He was."

"Do you think that there is no longer any danger?"

"None, sir."

"Well—well," said the reverend gentleman, "I will see what can be done."

"My only desire, sir," said Bigamini, "is to impart to him some of those words of hope, those crumbs of comfort which I have gleaned from you—to save an erring soul, if I can."

* * * * *

"I have obtained permission of the governor," said the chaplain, a day or two after the foregoing conversation; "but it is accompanied by certain irksome conditions."

Bigamini smiled in what he deemed a sweet and saintly manner.

"Oh, sir, we must be thankful for small mercies," he said, with a snuffle.

"You must go out in twos," said the chaplain, "coupled."

"Like dogs—"

"Hush."

"Oh, sir, I don't complain. I am only too glad to be humbled as low as they will. I have sinned, and as you truly say, I must expiate my fault."

The chaplain bowed his head in humility.

Bigamini clenched his hand tightly and muttered to himself:

"If I had you alone, I should feel joy in strangling you with these hands."

The chaplain sighed. But he had not overheard the muttered remark of the convict.

"How are we to go?" asked Bigamini, with something like impatience in his tone, in spite of his eagerness to suppress it.

The chaplain took a written order from his pocket and read it aloud:

"No. 4,093 is to accompany No. 4,112, handcuffed together, the right wrist of No. 4,112 to left of No. 4,093."

Bigamini quickened his hearing.

"Are we to be marched along by a driver, like the unhappy negroes?"

"No—no; that humiliation is spared you."

"I do not ask it, sir. It is meet that I should suffer all the degradation of my sentence."

"Hush," said the chaplain, pressing the convict's hand with emotion.

* * * * *

"Well," muttered Number 4,093, to himself, as the good chaplain disappeared, "as an 'umbug, I feel that I'm a gem of the first water. They're few and far between as can 'old a candle to me. I do it so regular, right-down real, too, as the water comes to my blessed peepers in the affectin' parts. I don't wonder as I takes the old devil-dodger. Why, I regular deceives myself at times, s'elp me Robert!"

* * * * *

The roll was called over, and the convicts paraded for exercise.

In twos or threes, handcuffed or chained together, they came along the parade ground, passed in revision by several of the officers in the settlement.

And foremost among them was the big, burly warder to whom the rebellious Toro had been chained upon the last occasion of his appearance in public.

He looked hard at Toro and strode up to him.

"So you're tamed down a bit, are you?" he said.

Toro was silent.

"I thought you would alter your tune, you mad fool. Those capers aren't to be tried on here. You have learnt that at last."

The Italian quivered from head to foot with rage suppressed.

A warning jerk from Number 4,093 upon his wrist kept one great fact before him.

Only an affectation of humility could help him now.

The law was too strong for him here.

He was in the toils and he must submit.

"It was lucky for you that they came and dragged you away," pursued the big warder, tauntingly; "for bad as what you got was, it is nothing to what I should have given you myself."

"Ha!"

"Quiet!" growled Number 4,093, in an undertone.

"I had to chastise a rough like you once," said the jailer, noting the torture he was inflicting upon the convict with considerable satisfaction.

"I wish I had you alone somewhere, with these cursed things off my wrists," muttered Toro to himself.

"Quiet," hissed Bigamini. "Don't you see his game?"

"Curse him!" muttered the Italian.

"Only once," continued the big warder. "He did not want talking to again. He's in the hospital now, and has been ever since; and as for you, if they had but left you alone in my care, I would have whipped you until you would have crawled and fawned at my feet like a well-licked hound."

The word was given to march.

Number 4,093 glanced up at his companion. Number 4,112 was bleeding profusely at the mouth.

He had bitten his lip through.

All his sufferings were as nothing compared to what he had to go through in listening to the taunts of the tantalizing jailer.

"Curse you—curse you!" he kept muttering; "if ever I get you alone, I'll strangle you."

"Swaller it—swaller it, Toro," whispered his comrade in the gang; "swaller it, and you'll laugh last."

Toro grunted.

"Perhaps."

"Very much so; look at them green fields over there—look at that 'ere river, and the 'ills, and the walleys."

"Yes," said Toro, bitterly: "and look at these."

He lifted his right wrist, and his companion's left, pointing in bitterness to the iron gyves.

"Well," said Bigamini, "what of that?"

"What's the use of green fields with these on?"

"I can slip 'em."

"How? They never leave you the least thing to make use of; why, the very spoon we eat their accursed poison out of, is chained down to the table."

"Shall I tell you a secret?" said Bigamini, looking about him nervously.

Toro's curiosity was excited by the other's manner.

"Yes; what is it?"

"I've found an old rusty nail in my caboose, and I've hid it away."

"What rubbish is this you are talking?" said Toro, angrily; "what is the use of that?"

Number 4,093 smiled with a pitying expression.

"H'inncerent!" he said; "teething lambkin. Why, there ain't a blessed lock in all London, from a Bramah to a Chubb, but I can pick with a nail; and do you think as I'm to beat by a pair of regglelation darbies at the antypoads? Get on with you."

Toro brightened up at this.

"Bravo!"

"Very much bravo."

"You are a genius, Bigamini, in your way."

"It all comes of being used to the artful line," said 4,093, modestly. "Why, when first I used to do the decayed mechanic outside the pubs on Saturday nights, I felt quite nervis, and the first fit I had in the street, I did it so bad, that the crusher—who was only a green hand hisself—browned at once to my game."

"Come now," says he; "keep moving."

"Then he gives me a clump with his mutton fist."

"Spit out yer mottle," says he, and gives me another clump; whereupon I glode."

Toro sighed.

"I suppose it has its advantages," he said, endeavoring to appear gracious to his companion, to whom he looked now for liberty; "but for my part, I think I would sooner jump into the sea than live like that."

Number 4,093 smiled.

"You always was give so to the dangerous line," he said; "my notion is safety. I earnt a honest living for years, with the broken crock fake."

Toro stared.

"The what?"

"The broken crock fake; you don't know that? Thought not. Don't want much capital neither to work it, only a sickly mug, you see."

"You did well then?"

"Yes, I did so. I found a basket in Covent Garden Market, when the salesman wasn't looking, and I filled it with broken crocks."

"Crocks?"

"Earthenware, chaney and glass, old broken things I took off dust-eaps. This load you carries on your 'ead, until you come to a quiet spot, in a nice retired street, when you pretend to slip; down you goes, crock and all; out comes the ladies, sympathising dears, and sees you weeping copious over your basket, and as a rule, they ask the value of your basket of earthenware. You says that it's a choice lot of goods you had just bought for trading honest, and in eight cases out of ten, they subscribes. Well, the worst I ever did, was half a wheel, and that in a comparative poor neighborhood."

"Half a wheel?"

"Two-an'-six."

"I see; and why did you quit such an admirable calling?" demanded Toro.

"I'll tell you," answered Bigamini, looking very straight. "I forgot one day, and worked the same street twice in the same week. A young woman pops out of the corner house, which I thought was a chance, for I goes down ter with the sex as a rule. I was on my blessed mettle than, and meant landing a thick an at least, an' so as I laid down on my back in the middle of the broken crocks, I thought I'd throw in a fit as well, just to work the extra sympathies."

"The young gal with the yaller 'air and the blue eyes looked on curious-like, but never offers so much as a tanner. A gent comes up, and says he: 'Poor fellar, here's half a crown for you.' I 'eld up my 'and for it, when the gal drags his 'and back. 'Don't give nothing,' says she, 'it's all a trick; I've seen him do it several times. The crockeryware is already broken.' 'The wagabone,' says the toff, 'we'll run 'im in,' and they did it too; and the worst was that while I was up before the beak, I was reckernised by a peeler as a party that was wanted for another job, and, the beasts, that's why you see me here now."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LONE WANDERER IN THE DESERT—HOPES, FEARS AND PERILS—THE SAVAGES' CAMP.
We shift the scene once more.

In a lone and desolate tract of country, a solitary wanderer was slowly dragging his weary course along.

A miserable man, with pale, careworn cheeks and deeply-sunken eyes, who labored painfully at every step.

His garments hung in rags about his shrunken form, and the wretched remnants of what were once upon a time jack-boots were now kept upon his feet by means of strings or thongs cut out of thick hide.

Many and many a weary mile had he wandered on without seeing the face or form of a human being.

Death!

Now his thoughts flew upward, and he asked himself if he had sinned so deeply as to be beyond all hope of redemption.

"Is it possible that there is no hope whatever for such a wretch as me? Have I offended so deeply," he asked, with upturned eyes, "that I am lost forever and ever? No—no—no! a hundred times no! I will not believe it; it would be a calamity upon Heaven to say it!"

Strange words these for such a man as Hunston.

At length he ventured to breathe a prayer.

As the old familiar words, that in his childhood he had first learned to utter kneeling in his mother's lap, passed his lips, he sank upon his knees and cried aloud for mercy.

And when the sense of his desolation and loneliness fell upon him, he passed through a series of sensations which pen cannot even faintly describe.

He crawled along as far as he was able, until one day he sank exhausted by the wayside, and he hoped that he was going to die.

"Most men are afraid to die," he thought to himself, "and here am I ready to rejoice could I know that this hour was to be my last upon earth.

"Will it never end?"

Ah, yes!

Perhaps when he least expected it.

Perhaps the awful moment would come when he would have changed his frame of mind.

He had but one subject constantly on his mind.

Scenes of his innocent boyhood flashed in rapid succession through his mind, and the feelings evoked sent the tears to his eyes, and in piteous accents he prayed to be allowed to die.

And praying thus, he sank gradually down and dropped, without intending it, into a profound sleep.

* * * * *

He must have slept several hours, for when he opened his eyes, the sun was sinking rapidly below the horizon.

Considerably refreshed by the rest, he arose and stretched himself out.

"The best sleep I have had for many a day!" he exclaimed; "many a day—ay, for many a week, many a month, I might—"

He paused.

Hark!

"What's that?"

A distant echo of a blast upon a horn.

He looked anxiously about him, and presently discerned, far away, a black mass of moving objects, the first glimpse of which set his heart throbbing.

Instinctively, he guessed that it was a mob of human beings.

He watched the black, waving mass intently for a considerable time.

Presently, having assured himself that they were coming in that direction, he began to look about him for a hiding-place.

"That clump of trees will do for me," he said.

So off he ran, as fast as his legs would carry him, and having picked out a roosting-place, up he clambered, and perched so as to be able to take observations while remaining unseen himself.

"They're blacks!"

They were indeed.

A whole clan of the aborigines, men, women and children.

The appearance of these people was a surprise to Hunston, for he had seen several of the natives of New Zealand, the Maories, and they were as fine specimens of manhood as the earth can show.

These Australians were the very reverse.

Ugly, ungainly figures—hideous flat faces, smeared with horrible pigments, which made them look like Chinese idols more than human beings.

Hunston had heard of these people, as far as character went.

He knew that their chief characteristics were cruelty and vindictiveness.

Their enmity to the whites was fierce and undying.

"If I show myself, I am lost here," thought Hunston.

He was right.

His life would not be worth five minutes' purchase.

Right once more.

Straight to that clump of trees they marched, yelling discordantly as they came, throwing up their arms, and capering about in the most alarming fashion.

Under the shade of the leafy boughs they pitched their camp.

"I am lost!" murmured Hunston, in abject terror.

His heart sank, and he was filled with fears of death!

He who for weeks past had been longing for it as the end to all his woes.

[THE END.]

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